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POWER AND DIPLOMACY

Politics are always a struggle for power, disguised and modified by prudence, reason and moral pretext. In the case of the Polish-Russian situation there has never been any doubt about the general outcome. The Soviet Union was bound by the laws which govern all powerful States to take the opportunity to safeguard her eastern boundary from the hostile intrigues which have always found their peculiar home in Poland and the Baltic States. Objection could not come from Imperial Britain, which takes a same view of her own far-flung frontiers, nor from America, whose Monroe Doctrine is based on similar considerations of power and security. Polish intransigence was a chief factor in the failure of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations in 1939, and the frontier which Lord Curzon thought ethnographically and morally fair twenty-five years ago, was only denied to Russia because a Polish army took it from the Soviet Union in her hour of weakness. That to-day, in her might, the U.S.S.R. would regain this frontier which Lenin, with quiet realism, relinquished, was a foregone conclusion; and that no Poland can now survive that is hostile to the Soviet Union follows from the facts of geography and history.

The question for diplomacy, therefore, was whether this new power situation would be recognised without a struggle that would have damaging repercussions far beyond Eastern Europe and whether the new relationship of Poland and Russia could be so adjusted that Poles would retain their self-respect and the reality of independence in managing their own affairs. It seemed when the Soviet note offered to accept the Curzon line as a frontier and to enter into discussion on the details of settlement, that these important objectives might be obtained. The Polish reply and Russia's further retort have withered this optimism. The Polish Government did not explicitly reject the offer of the Curzon line, but Russia was no doubt correct in deducing that when the Poles, without clinching the offer, asked that London and Washington should be associated in the negotiations, they really hoped to obtain the backing of the State Department for an interminable wrangle on the whole frontier issue. Russia needed, in reply to the offer of the Curzon line, not an invitation to table-talk, but an immediate instruction to Polish guerillas to fight on the same side as the Red Army when it entered Poland. We are not surprised that Russia rejected the Polish proposal as it stood. Mr. Hull has reason to be grateful to Moscow for refusing a frontier mediation which could have done the Poles no good and which could have brought nothing but embarrassment to the Roosevelt Administration.

So much for the frontier issue, which, as we have said, had always a foregone conclusion. The real issues are the character of the Polish Government and the future of Poland west of the Curzon line. The present Polish Premier is a sensible man, apparently capable of facing realities. But Moscow could not be expected to regard as potentially friendly a Government which retains the virulently anti-Soviet Sosnowski as Commander-in-Chief, or which has as Foreign Minister a man who, when Polish Ambassador in Tokio, preached the doctrine that Poland should have a special alliance with Japan, so that in the coming war against Bolshevism the U.S.S.R. could be attacked on two fronts. Changes in the personnel of the Polish Government would seem to be a necessary condition of negotiation.

Russia's rejection of the Polish reply was therefore inevitable. Whether its uncompromising tone and substance were wise is quite another matter. If the U.S.S.R. had replied by saying that it would only enter into negotiations on other matters after Poland had agreed upon the Curzon line, the hope of reaching an agreed settlement would have been brighter. For in fact neither Washington nor London would have backed Poland in refusing this very substantial modification of the frontier taken by the U.S.S.R. in 1939. It is likely that they would also have held that those Poles who hate the Soviet Union more than they hate the Nazis are not fit persons to represent a Poland which must accommodate itself to the necessity of a dominant Russia. But Stalin did not take this conciliatory line. Rather, it is to be deduced from this reply that he not merely rejects all negotiation with this Polish Government, but that the independence he offers and the settlement he proposes are to be negotiated only with a Government he will himself set up in Warsaw. The view that the Soviet Union now intends a unilateral decision is supported by the report in *Pravda* of a rumour that British officials have been meeting Ribbentrop in the Pyrenees to discuss a separate peace. *Pravda* is not a scandal paper which prints idle rumours to increase its circulation. If such a report, obviously damaging to the United Nations, appears in the official columns of *Pravda*, it is to be presumed that Russia is again using the tactics, so often employed in the days before Teheran, of warning Britain and America of the dangers of incurring her dissatisfaction.

This rough diplomacy is intelligible, but dangerous. With a long inheritance of enmity and suspicion, suffering from a thousand wounds, the Soviet Union is naturally disinclined to have dealings with those who prefer old animosities to co-operation against the common enemy. But to insist on a unilateral solution and to regard as an insult a proposal for a United Nations discussion would be a mistake, easily made by a country which has discovered its power, and which thinks it unnecessary to modify its use or be polite about its intentions. For one moment, perhaps influenced by the experienced counsel of Dr. Benes, Stalin was prepared to make these concessions to world opinion which relieve tension, save face and avert friction. Perhaps if he is assured that no one really intends to waste time arguing about the Curzon line or supporting Poles whose hostility is unappeasable, Stalin may return to the mood of his earlier Note. Power is decisive in the jungle of world politics, but it is not the only influence, nor is it weak to use power with moderation. If the United Nations are to stay united—and Stalin is the most urgent for this post-war unity—it is essential that none of the three Great Powers should demand from the others acquiescence in its own unilateral decisions.

The South Tirolese

For strategic as well as political reasons, the South Tirol deserves our attention. When Mussolini fell, Hitler could hardly persevere in his former policy of complicity in the forcible suppression of its German-Austrian population. Two signs of a change may be noted. Firstly, the German population, which was to have been transferred to the Reich by the last day of 1943, has for the most part remained in its homes. Secondly, the former Gauleiter of the German North Tirol, Franz Hofer, has been appointed High Commissioner for the three districts of the Italian South Tirol, while under him, in charge of Bolzano, is the trusted local leader of the German resistance to Italian assimilation, Karl Tinzl. Short of throwing over Mussolini altogether and re-annexing the province, this is about as far as Hitler can go. The South Tirol was the region where Mussolini first blooded his thugs and taught them the arts of oppression. We should bear in mind that the South Tirolese, patriots though they were, never were Nazis, and always resented Hitler's abandonment of their cause.

Politics, Mr. Wallace and the C.I.O.

The importance of the C.I.O. in American politics continues to grow. Three events in the last week confirm this. First, unlike the A.F. of L., the C.I.O. has announced its intention of attending the World Trade Union Conference in June. Its president, Mr. Phillip Murray, had already accepted the T.U.C. invitation, but his latest statement, with its strong emphasis on the value of such discussions to the trade-union organisations which participate in them, was made, no doubt, with a sidelong glance at the A.F. of L. The obstinacy of its leaders is forcing the Federation into a difficult position which has begun to arouse some protest from its well-disciplined membership. Next, the two-day conference of the C.I.O. "Political Action Committee," just concluded in New York, showed that in spite of the refusal of the A.F. of L. to co-operate, American labour will enter the November elections with the first nation-wide political organisation in its history. This development should not be construed in any way as the third party that John Lewis and others have been demanding. The reports of the conference make it clear that Sidney Hillman's campaign is directed equally against anti-labour and anti-Roosevelt Republicans and Democrats. Finally, Mr Wallace has gone out of his way to appeal for C.I.O. support of the President's message to Congress. It seems certain that the C.I.O. will continue to oppose the National Service Act whilst no steps are taken to tap the great man-power reserves (especially coloured labour) that still remain. But it is unlikely that the President and the C.I.O. will fall out very seriously; they have too many common interests at stake for that.

Mr. Butler and the Left

Apart from the opposition of the Catholic hierarchy, the criticism of Mr. Butler's Education Bill is directed mainly at two points—his failure to put into the Bill a "target" date for raising the leaving age to sixteen, and his failure to propose abolition of fees in all schools receiving aid from public funds. These two points are both stressed by the Trades Union Congress and by other critics associated with the Left. On the second issue, Mr. Butler can of course seek shelter behind the Fleming Committee, which has not yet presented its report. But this need not have prevented him from putting plainly into the Bill a power which would have allowed him to act administratively without any question of bad faith should a majority of the Fleming Committee recommend abolition. On the "sixteen" issue, Mr. Butler has even less excuse. It is plain that the leaving age cannot be raised to sixteen immediately the war ends, and that time must be given for preparing the teachers and the buildings. But in practice the teachers will not be trained, or the buildings built, unless the Local Education Authorities are given a "target" date by which they are expected to be ready for the change to be made. To give the Minister power to fix a date at some unspecified future time is not enough.

"There are Lots of Good Fish in the Sea ..."

There is not much fish in the shops these days; but there appears to be quite a lot being dumped back into the sea or going bad on railway sidings. A few months ago the chief complaints came from the West Coast fishermen, and related to the herring trade, especially in Scotland. Now that glut is over, and the trouble seems to be mainly on the East Coast, with the sprat as chief of the dramatis personæ. In both cases, one of the excuses offered for dumping back into the sea has been that much of the catch was small and unsuitable for curing, and that there was no way of getting it to market in time. And there is also the question of the guaranteed price, which does not apply to the small fish. Buyers therefore dislike handling them, and either will not buy at all, or offer prices which the fishermen regard as derisory. But the fact remains that, at the very time when large quantities of fish are being thrown back, there are thousands of consumers who want fish and simply cannot buy it. One cannot help feeling that the fish trade is badly organised, and that more could be handled if the Ministry of Food would give its mind to the problem. Was not the Minister saying, only a few days ago, that meat is bound to be short, and we must eke out our supplies with fish?

"Reasonable and Practicable"

The good intentions inspiring Mr. Bevin's Reinstatement Bill are unquestioned. But will it work? The Bill imposes on employers an obligation to re-engage at the earliest "reasonable and practicable" opportunity all previous employees who have joined the Services. So far, again, as is "reasonable and practicable" re-engagement must be on terms not less favourable than they would have been if the applicant had not joined the Forces, and must last for not less than six months. Disputes as to the interpretation of the term "reasonable and practicable"—regulations by the Minister defining its general meaning are to be tabled—will be referred to special Reinstatement Tribunals, whose decisions if favourable to the ex-employee, will be enforceable by fine and given grounds for claims for compensation in the courts. If demobilisation is very gradual, and if the Government of the day pursues a vigorous policy of full employment, no serious difficulties should arise. Otherwise the Bill offers an appealing vista of litigation. At best the Bill is open to the criticism that it pre-supposes a post-Armistice putting back of the clock which may accord ill with post-war industrial planning in a changed world.

The Rochdale Centenary

The Co-operative Movement is busy making preparations to celebrate this year in various ways the centenary of the Rochdale Pioneers. The centenary year has begun well for the "Co-ops" with the announcement of the latest food registration figures. For sugar, the Co-operative Societies have 26.3 per cent. of total registrations; for fats 25.7 per cent., for bacon 24.2 per cent.—all increases on their percentages in the previous period. In general, one can say that of the total trade in these registered foods, well over a quarter is in the hands of the Co-ops, well under a quarter in those of the multiple stores, and about half in the hands of independent traders. The figures are, however, very different for different parts of the country. In the case of sugar, the Co-operative percentage falls to 15 in London and rises to nearly 33 in the North of England. Co-operators will have to think hard about their movement's future. As standards rise, consumers spend a smaller proportion of their incomes on the basic necessaries which the Co-ops are most organised to supply. If Co-operation is not to lose ground, it must show itself as efficient in meeting new needs as it is in supplying the older basic necessaries of life.

PARLIAMENT : Education Eve

Wednesday afternoon.

MEMBERS trooped back from the Christmas recess in what might be called a state of general agogness. There was much gossip in smoke-room and corridors about election strategy, agriculture, the Prime Minister's sense of dramatic timing; particularly about the *Pravda* peace rumour; most of all about the one immediately overlooming topic, the Education Bill. Anxious clergymen and black-jowled Popish plotters swarmed in the lobby.

Election strategy: Disposition to accept any progressive arrangement or "coalition of the Left" is confined, in the Labour Party, to a minority—but a minority not consisting only of the expected Left-wingers. Butler's reference, in opening the Education debate, to the need for continuance of "national unity" after the war was loudly cheered, mainly by Tories.

Agriculture: Even the rural Tories will not all go all-out for the N.F.U. against Hudson. Most of them deprecate the violent personal attacks made on him; some say that N.F.U. Headquarters have mishandled the dispute and must have known all along what the Government's interpretation of the prices "pledge" would be; all accept gratefully the line that long-term security is more important than immediate high profits.

The P.M.: Members thought that newspaper descriptions of him as "tanned" were inaccurate. He was, however, in excellent spirits.

Some Tories staged a fanfaronade on the Disabled Persons (Employment) Bill. They wanted priority in training for those disabled by "war injury." Captain Cobb and Commander Galbraith made the most substantial case for this demagogic discrimination. Captain Bellenger and other Labour Members were not slow to deprecate such attempts to cash in on or inflame Service *v.* civilian antagonism, 'to make divisions in the ranks of the working class," as Gallacher said, applying the word "rotten" to the ruling class a number of times in rapid succession. None the less, the ruling class got from Bevin and Tomlinson specific promises of preference for ex-Servicemen; though Bevin did not want limiting phrases included in the Bill. He spoke of the "political kudos" that could be got out of putting forward such amendments. Major Manningham-Buller indignantly denied any desire "to play party politics"; but Labour Members thought it not impossible that there might some day be references to such skirmishes as this in one or two Tory election addresses.

At question-time Herbert Morrison assured Captain Ramsay (in writing) that another 18B detainee, Mr. Arnold Leese would be set free as soon as he could leave hospital. Ellis Smith got a fairly satisfactory interim reply to his suggestion of a "T.V.A." scheme for the Morecambe Bay area. Eden made a strong statement condemning continued Spanish intervention on the eastern front; Shinwell (who does not, after all, seem to be going to cross from one front bench to the other) wondered if these strong statements did much good, and called for "action." Franco's former friend, Lennox-Boyd, answered questions for the first time for the Minister of Aircraft Production; he was modest and audible, and denied Perkins's statement that "at the present rate" it would take 49 years to finish the drawings of a certain new type of aircraft. Sir Patrick Hannon, whose voice is like the crackling of a small wood fire under an empty pot, fussed dimly about the export trade. Major Nield bowled the Prime Minister clean out regarding one of the deserving operational classes excluded from the 1939-43 star, reducing him to "Oh . . . er . . . um . . . ah—I must look into that." There was a loud laugh, perhaps partly incredulous, when the Prime Minister assured Acland that, although many serving Members had made political speeches in the country with impunity, the new Member for Skipton had not been singled out especially when the War Office forbade him recently to speak at Edinburgh.

Some Members waste the time of the House when (as occasionally happens) they get a satisfactory answer: they rise and ask obsequiously if the Minister is aware what widespread satisfaction his reply will give. When Oliver Stanley announced that the ancient claim of Ja-Ja of Opobo was at last to be met, Sorensen resorted to this ritual, adding that didn't it also show how right Members had been to raise the matter. He thus asked for Stanley's repartee, the neatest of the week: "I must leave the hon. gentleman to blow his own trumpet."

PONTIFEX MINOR

ALL THE WINNERS

We dealt last week with some of the electoral and political questions raised by the Government defeat and Common Wealth victory at the Skipton election. From now until the end of the war electoral questions will become more and more important. For the nature and permanence of the peace will to a large extent depend upon who wins the elections and forms or controls governments here and in the States. The peace will be made by Russia, the U.S.A. and Britain; Russia will be Stalin, but who and what the U.S.A. and Britain will be as peace makers must depend upon the ballot box. The last peace was already half lost when Lloyd George, too clever by half, contrived to put the country and himself in the hands of a Tory House of Commons. The same thing will happen again if Mr. Churchill and the Labour Party are allowed to repeat in 1944 or 1945 the history of that fatal election and to fill the House with Tory Members whose policy is perpetually to run away from the future into a dead and discredited past.

Most politicians—and not only the Tadpoles who are always wrong—seem to assume that Mr. Churchill, with his prestige as a supremely successful war Prime Minister, is certain to lead the Tory Party to a great victory at the peace poll. The Labour Party, in this view, has put its poor sheep's head in a political noose, one end of the rope being in Mr. Churchill's hand and the other in the Central Office of the Conservative Party. At the right moment, the noose will be tightened and the Labour Party throttled, gently if it follows its lamblike or sheeplike leaders and consents to become the cold mutton of an eternal coalition, not so gently if it dares to show its sheep's teeth and go into opposition. The acceptance of this view by Labour itself accounts for many of the deplorable symptoms in the Labour Party, for the defeatism of so many of the leaders and for the pernicious anaemia which is chronic now in Transport House. They see no alternative between becoming the cold mutton in the coalition or a living scapegoat in the political wilderness, and temperamentally they prefer to be mutton.

This lugubrious forecast is not nearly as certain as the prophets tell us. It is difficult to fit an election result like that of Skipton into the picture of a sweeping Tory victory under the Churchill banner. There are factors in the social situation which the professional prophets forget to notice. Some of them are dealt with in the current issue of the *Political Quarterly* in an extremely interesting article by Mr. Tom Harrisson, which deserves careful study, particularly by the Labour Party leaders. Mr. Harrisson provides evidence, largely based upon mass-observation, which at least makes it by no means certain that the Tory machine, under the cover of Mr. Churchill's popularity, can repeat the trick and victory of the Khaki election. The evidence is of two kinds. First, there seems to be almost everywhere a definite swing to the Left in that eternal and mysterious movement of the political pendulum between Right and Left. The pendulum rarely determines the result of any particular election, but it has frequently been made—and might again be made at the end of the war—the basis of resounding electoral victories and defeats. The second factor is the attitude of the ordinary elector to Mr. Churchill. All the evidence goes to show that Mr. Churchill's prestige and position as head of the Government for prosecuting the war have never been higher or more secure. An overwhelming majority of the people feel instinctively that for prosecuting the war until Nazi Germany is completely defeated we must have a coalition government and that Winston Churchill is the only man to be at its head. The people's instinct is sound, we believe. But Mr. Harrisson's evidence also goes to show that in a very large number, indeed in a majority of cases the people who feel this are also suspicious of and opposed to him as a post-war leader. "His age, his already almost complete achievement, his supposed disinterest in home affairs, and his alleged lack of sympathy with working people over domestic issues, all add up in the public mind. Thus, in answer to a straight question on whether or not Churchill could or should be post-war Prime Minister, the majority reject the proposition."

These facts do not, of course, mean that a defeat for the Right in the post-war election here is certain or even probable. But they do show that a defeat of the Left is not inevitable and suggest to the Labour Party an alternative policy to that of ending life as cold mutton. None of the political parties has any wide appeal to the ordinary man or woman at the present moment. That is the result of coalition government and the anæmia and paralysis in Transport House. But though the ordinary man can now see little difference between the Conservative and Labour Parties as members of the coalition, he recognises, with Sancho Panza, that there is a difference between Peter and Peter. The Conservative Peter has always stood for the past and its privileges and profits; the Labour Peter at least has stood for the Left, for change, progress, and Socialism. If then the Labour Party now makes it clear that as soon as the task of winning the war is completed, it will co-operate with other progressive forces and parties, and put itself vigorously at the head of a movement to the Left, with a policy of social security, Socialism and internationalism, it has a chance of giving the surprise of their lives both to its own defeatists and to the controllers of the Tory Party machine. If it combines firmness and caution in the period of war coalition which remains (for it must not allow itself to be jockeyed out of the Government before victory) with boldness in leaving the coalition and putting its programme before the electorate, the distrust of Churchill as a peace Minister and the general movement of opinion to the Left, the desire for something better than a return to the world of Stanley Baldwins and Neville Chamberlains, may bring overwhelming support to it and to its ally, Common Wealth. In that case it would be found that the noose had slipped over some one else's neck.

MR. HUDSON AND THE FARMERS

(From a Special Correspondent)

For so long all has been serene on the agricultural front that it is something of a shock when suddenly out of the blue a devil of a row develops between Mr. Hudson and the farmers. The Minister of Agriculture becomes the object of violent attack for having broken, so it is alleged, a Government pledge, while he, in turn, rates the farmers for greed and profiteering. What is behind it all? The man-in-the-street, in so far as he thinks about food production at all, has formed the impression that British farmers have done a fine job of work these last four years; he looks on Mr. Hudson as an energetic and successful Minister who has conspicuously delivered the goods; he sees in every county innumerable tractors tearing up derelict grassland and harvesting enormous crops of grain; he observes that yields have been excellent, with hardly any of last war's ploughing-up fiascos; he is told that the dairy herd has been maintained and that vegetable production has increased astronomically. Every farmer he meets in pub or club looks extremely pleased with life and (in private) admits to a certain prosperity. Then suddenly these fine fellows launch a vitriolic attack on their Minister. Well may the layman comment with Burke: "and having looked to the Government for bread, on the very first scarcity they will turn and bite the hand that fed them."

The story is briefly that in December, 1943, following an award by the Agricultural Wages Board, farm workers' wages were raised from 60s. to 65s. per week. This would cost farmers £9 million in the current year and £15 million in a full year. Shortly afterwards the Minister announced certain price adjustments, including an extra 1d. per gallon for milk, which will only cover part of the increased costs, e.g. only £6 million out of the £9 million this year. Then the storm broke. The farmers contend that the Government is pledged to increase prices by the *full amount* of any increase in costs; hence, they have been betrayed.

The "pledge" referred to was originally made in the autumn of 1940 in these words: "that prices will be subject to adjustments to the extent of any substantial change in costs of production." It is important to recall the situation at that time. Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, rumours of invasion, threat of a U-boat offensive. Farmers were being urged on to superhuman tasks of ploughing-up and sowing for 1941; their costs of production had risen steeply (wages up 38 per cent., fertilisers over 30 per cent. and feeding stuffs over 40 per cent.); the new prices schedule for the 1940 crops amply covered these increases, it is true, but without that "something extra" farmers could not have afforded the machinery, implements, etc., necessay for their new commitments. Moreover, it was widely felt that they, like the farm workers, deserved redress for the shamefully low incomes vouchsafed them in peacetime.

Against this background the Government wanted to give farmers an assurance, namely that the new income level which farmers were enjoying in 1940/41 would not be encroached upon by one penny while the war lasted; in particular, that if costs increased further (and at that date no one yet knew whether a Treasury price stabilisation policy could be operated successfully) agricultural prices would be adjusted accordingly. There is not the shadow of doubt that the Government meant what they said and mean it now. The pledge stands.

Let us examine what has happened in the intervening period since the pledge was given. As a result of numerous price revisions the price of wheat has risen from 14s. 6d. in autumn, 1940, to 19s. 6d., barley from 20s. 6d. to 27s. 6d. (but last year it exceeded 60s.), potatoes 100s. to 150s., sugar beet 48s. 6d. to 86s. 6d., fat cattle 60s. to 70s., fat sheep 13d. to 16d., milk 18d. to 23d., and vegetables by very large amounts indeed. What, between the same dates, has happened to costs? The only major change is in wages which, including the new addition, have risen 35 per cent.; for the rest, the stabilisation policy has been remarkably successful: none of the other main items of expenditure, i.e. rent, feeding stuffs, and fetilisers, has risen more than 5 per cent. Taking costs as a whole, a fair estimate would be 15–20 per cent. for the increase in the period under review. Comparing this with the price adjustments can any farmer maintain that all cost increases have not been fully met and more than met?

And this is not all. Farmers have been assisted in numerous other ways; for example, the hill sheep subsidy, extensions in the credit facilities under the "goods and services scheme," development of contract services by the County Executive

Committees. Do farmers write these off as of no pecuniary value? Financial assistance has, in fact, been granted not merely to cover cost increases but also for a variety of other reasons: to help farmers in hard-hit districts, to encourage producers on marginal land, and above all to act as a spur and inducement to greater effort.

There is yet another point. So far we have spoken only of *gross* costs, whereas increases in *net* costs have been much less. Farmers, and great is the credit due to them, have vastly expanded the volume of output with very little increase in the volume of input. They have handled these prodigious wartime harvests with hardly any increase in their labour force, they have found tractors cheaper than horses, they have obtained, by using scientific advice, far greater returns from their applications of fertilisers. Does any farmer dispute that British agriculture has become more efficient in the war years?

What conclusion is to be drawn from all this? Clearly farmers are far better off to-day than in 1940. It has been said that not merely did Mr. Hudson succeed in making two blades of grass grow where one grew before, but that also for every pound note of income formerly received he now gives the farmer three or four.

The farmers' reply to these arguments is quite straightforward. They dismiss as irrelevant all these price and cost figures. Anything which happened *before* the recent wage increase, no matter how high prices may have gone and how much farmers' share of the national cake may have expanded since the pledge was given (and unquestionably it has expanded a lot) does not count. They claim the right to have the full cost increase added to prices *after* the wage adjustment. That is their interpretation of the pledge, though it is certainly not what the Government intended. In this dilemma it is for the public and the House of Commons to decide which is reasonable.

Unfortunately, as so often happens, the issues have been ill-stated. Mr. Hudson has confused counsels and spoilt his watertight case by indicting farmers' profits, by quoting figures from his own farm (irrelevant) and pleading that his Ministry's calculations were at fault (surely untrue). He could so easily have said: "The pledge stands; it has been fulfilled in letter and spirit, more than fulfilled," adding: "and if you challenge me further you shall have the pledge and nothing but the pledge, but in that case I warn you, gentlemen, that prices will have to go down—all of them." Instead of plain speaking, he has preferred verbal jiggery-pokery and given farmers the impression that he is resolved to die in the last dyke of prevarication. Such action forfeits farmers' support and the nation's confidence.

But the farmers' leaders have forgotten the responsibilities of leadership, and will alienate the public if they persist in extravagant claims. It is miserly to argue that of the increased payments to farm workers the farmers cannot meet a part out of their own pockets; it jeopardises public confidence. Enough farmers have now written books about their war-time experiences for the public to realise that while production achievement has been magnificent the privileges have been commensurate. Farmers have been able to stay at home and undertake all the tasks that the best of them longed to do in peacetime—and have been well paid for it. Judged by pre-war standards they have many of them achieved the impossible both in the fields and in their bank balances. For them during these four years on the fourth front it has been production to the limit, publicity in plenty; profit without risk, patriotism without sacrifice; millions of bushels from the land and millions of pounds from the Exchequer; a warm place in the nation's heart and the warmth of their own firesides.

Most farmers do not want to exploit the community. Many of them in country pubs and buses will tell you that in their view the pendulum has swung from excessive neglect to excessive benefits which cannot be sustained in the long run. Many disapprove the present demonstrations by their leaders; they judge that 5s. on wages coupled with the new prices will make a small dent in their present incomes, but a perfectly bearable and justifiable one.

If the rest seem to be making utterly unreasonable demands, there is a deeper reason. The immediate issue may be a bad one, but farmers regard it as a portent of worse to come, as a first sign that the community will let them down again as after the last war. They must fight this skirmish even if in itself senseless, in order to prepare their positions for the main battle later on. That is the real significance of the row. It is not Mr. Hudson or his Ministry, it is not whether farmers can afford the extra shillings; it is whether after the war the incomes and living standards of the farming community are to remain somewhere near present levels or to fall back toward pre-1939 levels. They suspect that the nation will vote for cheap imported food which they reckon synonymous with agricultural poverty. (Is it?) They will fight to retain their prosperity, reckoned synonymous with a large wheat and barley acreage. (Must it be?) And they have grounds for anxiety, since they know that the Cabinet has looked at post-war agricultural policy and shirked a decision on it. No Government spokesman has yet explained how it is proposed to reconcile cheap food for the nation with a square deal for British agriculture. When that has been done simply and intelligently there will be no one more co-operative than the farmer.

THE COMMUNIST LINE

THE tactics and programmes of Communist parties have passed through an infinite number of phases since Lenin broke away from the Socialist International. One thing they never did until the other day: they never hauled down the flag or admitted defeat. Driven underground, reduced to a persecuted handful, they still kept their faith in a final triumph, which they based on the Marxist interpretation of history and its analysis of the fundamental flaws in the capitalist system. But now the proud record is broken. Mr. Earl Browder, leader of the American Communist Party, has announced its dissolution in terms which concede that Capitalism may be in the long run a workable system, which can give peace to the world and serve the people's interests.

On examination his speech proves remarkable only on its theoretical side. The practical policy he urged upon his fellow Communists was eminently sane and realistic. The two-party system is rooted in America's tradition. Capitalism is for the present so strong as to be unassailable. The effective choice lies between the Big Business brand of Republicanism and the radical Democracy of Vice-President Wallace. Debating whether they should again go through the futile gesture of nominating candidates in this year's elections, Communists may well have decided that it would be wiser to use their considerable gifts for permeation and organisation to secure a victory for the New Deal. They will concern themselves with the rights of Labour, with the equal treatment of negroes, the maintenance of civil liberty, and the victory of the American allies of the Soviet Union. Lenin would have applauded this decision, which follows from "the uneven development of Capitalism" in different countries. (He would probably admit to-day that in the totalitarian countries Fascism has set back the working-class movement for generations and compelled it again to fight for the liberties that seemed, in the more advanced countries, securely won in the nineteenth century.)

Mr. Browder, however, based his practical decisions on arguments that must make Lenin turn in his mausoleum. If reports of his speech are correct, he pledged his party (to be reduced to a Communist Political Educational Association) to accept "free enterprise" as the American system and to work it loyally. In these phrases America's leading theoretician threw over the whole Marxist position and buried the discovery of the contradictions within Capitalism, which render the trade cycle inevitable, and drive capitalist nations certainly towards imperialism and therefore towards war.

Why did he do it? Has he been converted to the view that the New Deal has in some way solved the dilemma of Capitalism, or is he simply searching for phrases that will make his policy more plausible and convincing? The key is to be sought, as usual, in the interests of the Soviet Union; Mr. Browder has been moving in this direction for many months. We have before us the *New Masses* of April, 1943, which reports his speeches in a debate on March 21. He then said that "America must win this war as a capitalist nation." He foresaw that victory would enhance the prestige of Capitalism and give it "a better chance of survival." He concluded:

> We are perfectly willing to support a Capitalism in the United States after the war which is compatible with the interests of the people and which takes into account the necessary problems of the people.

It is amazing for a leading Marxist to say that any form of Capitalism can be "compatible with the interests of the people," and it is odd and significant that Mr. Browder should have thought it necessary to produce such an argument to back the quite simple tactical decision to support the New Deal. That, however, was his view even before the Moscow Conference and Teheran.

To arrive at his real meaning, have we to substitute for "the people" the words "Soviet Union"? He came near saying it, for in his peroration what he demanded was the collaboration of America with Russia "to preserve world order." In concrete terms Mr. Browder has sacrificed his party and its fundamental doctrines in order to further a Russo-American alliance, and it may be a prolongation of American aid on Lend-Lease terms.

How far is this latest Communist line local and peculiar to America? Since the dissolution of the Comintern it has been logical for each National Party to shape its own policy. May we expect a dissolution of the party in this country also? There are some differences. Labour is a separate political entity here, as it is not in the United States, and Capitalism is less solidly entrenched. Two other differences may be more decisive. British opinion is much more enthusiastic about Russia, and we have concluded an alliance with her for twenty years. At the same time, we are less able than the Americans to assist her economic recovery. British Communists have not to keep in mind, so consistently as their American comrades, the danger of embarrassing a Government from which Stalin will need material aid which might be sacrificed by an error in tactics. On the balance, then, Soviet interests may not demand so great or at least so speedy a sacrifice from the British Communist Party. In the case of France the probability is that Russia will approve of a Communist Party as strong as it was before the war and possibly a good deal stronger. But here, and, indeed, throughout Western Europe, the programme will be based on political democracy with a United Front as an immediate solution. A Gladstonian Liberal could have accepted the latest version of the French Party's manifesto. On this showing, as far as policy goes, Communists should now find no difficulty in co-operating with the despised Social Democrats—except that Social Democratic policy may sometimes be dangerously near to Socialism. The same may be said of the appeal from the Moscow Committee to Germany, which undertook to respect "lawfully acquired property." Will the same thing hold true in Eastern Europe within Russia's sphere of influence? It may be so, for what Moscow favours is apparently the participation of Communists in coalition governments. All that is certain about the Communist programme is that the power of the landed classes, whether in Poland or Hungary, will be broken. In short, Communism now stands pretty much where Mr. Lloyd George stood in his Limehouse days.

A LONDON DIARY

THE unscrupulous character of Roman Catholic political tactics could not be better illustrated than by the sermon preached by the new Archbishop of Westminster on Tuesday night. That he should take the opportunity of a ceremonial occasion, broadcast to the nation, to define Catholic principles about the family, the status of women and the education of children was natural enough. That he should launch an untruthful tirade against the Government Bill that was to be debated by the House of Commons next day was a scandal. His attack was based on the assumption that the Bill deprived Catholic parents of the right to have their children educated "in schools that would not offend their consciences," and in emotional phrases about the sacrifices of Catholics during the war, he called upon Catholic parents throughout the land to claim "the right to equal treatment in the education of their children." The facts are that Catholics have a privileged position in British education and that they are treated with great, many would say, excessive generosity in this Bill. It is only in a sermon that the Archbishop could get away with the suggestion that the Bill in any way penalises Catholics.

* * *

Mr. Roosevelt's speech offering, among other electoral attractions, to increase taxation and conscript labour was, some say, very bold. Others say it was very "smart tactics." Well, there is no contradiction. I wish the Labour Party, like Mr. Roosevelt, understood that boldness and good tactics are often the same thing. How does it come about that, in an election year, it is good tactics for the President of the United States to tell the electorate that it ought to be taxed more and Labour that it ought to be regimented? Because Mr. Roosevelt can see two moves ahead. 1944 is not only an electoral year, it is also to be a year of fighting, and there will come a time when blood, tears and sweat will stir in America the feelings they did in England in 1940. When the casualty lists mount people will demand the right to share in sacrifice. This is the politics of courage and intelligence.

* * *

Surely by now we have had about enough from General Franco. Some months, or even years, have gone by since we have heard anyone say that he was a Christian gentleman with a golf handicap of two. Bombs are not put in orange cargoes, it will be said, by Franco himself, but neither would they be there if Franco was not an ally of Germany. I am not talking about Falange demonstrations against Britain and the occupation of Tangier, or the pro-Axis tone of the government-controlled press of Spain. More important is the fact that remnants of the Blue Division (now called "Legion") are apparently still fighting with the Germans on the Eastern Front, that General Franco offered a million soldiers to the Reich, and that, as the remarkable letter from Gil Robles (reproduced in the *Spanish News Letter* and referred to by us on January 8th) put it:

> The English have assuredly in their possession (including copies of Spanish official communications exchanged with Germany) conclusive proofs of grave acts of hostilities against the Allies, committed with the full complicity of the Spanish Government, such as the provisioning of submarines in Spanish waters, the placing of bombs on British ships anchored in our ports, the installation of radio stations along the coasts of the Strait of Gibraltar to inform German submarines of the movements of Allied convoys, thereby causing serious losses during the most difficult moments of the Battle of Malta.

The argument for appeasing Franco used to be that we could not risk another enemy in the Mediterranean. But no one will seriously argue that Spain will declare war on us now, and the last shred of excuse for B.B.C. appeasement in deference to Sir Samuel Hoare's protests has gone. Bombs in orange boxes should be met with something more than polite diplomatic protests. As Gil Robles quite rightly said:

> Up to the present they have remained silent because it has suited their convenience to do so . . . by absolutely indisputable evidence it may be asserted that the Allies have decided to finish with the totalitarian regimes, in whatever manner it may be. Roosevelt has made this abundantly clear in his recent speech by affirming that Fascism, Nazism and similar systems shall disappear. It would be childish to suppose that, when the dictators and all their friends are to be swept away, the dictatorial regime of a man like Franco, whom the Allies heartily detest, shall be left as a favoured territory.

I hope Gil Robles is right.

* * *

Mr. Eden has now promised a tougher protest about the Legion. He might go on to cancel all contracts for oranges packed by Falangists under Gestapo orders. Torres, turned off the air for the crime of advocating the principles of the Atlantic Charter, should be reinstated with orders to continue the good work. Franco should be compelled to return the Italian ships sent to the Balearic Islands for repairs and kept there. We should insist on the evacuation of Tangier, illegally taken over by Fascist Spain. If we break off relations with Franco altogether it would do nothing but good. It would help from the immediate military point of view in Spain and in South America (where Franco's prestige, bolstered by us, is an important factor in encouraging Fascism). Morally it would have an immense effect wherever men still have hopes that we stand for decency.

* * *

The old game of finding a plausible slogan to disguise your real purpose is being played with more than usual skill just now in South America. In Bolivia, for instance, I do not doubt that the National Revolutionary Movement, which is the party of the middle classes and the small business men, has considerable popular backing. In its five years of life it has been violently nationalist, attacking co-operation with the United States on the grounds that a much better deal could be done over the mineral wealth of the country. Paz Estensoro who led the December revolt, and others among its leaders have been responsible for anti-labour riots and were associated with a Nazi conspiracy in the summer of 1941.* Its newspaper, *La Calle*, has not only been denounced by Bolivian Labour leaders as a Fascist organ, but it is also on the black list of the State Department. Yet from the time of the Catavi massacre of the striking tin miners in 1942, the party has continually made itself out to be Labour's best friend; Estensoro conducted a stormy campaign against the great tin barons, Patino, Arramayo and Hochschild, which reflected popular indignation against them. Now, after the dust of the putsch has settled, the party makes promises to Bolivian Labour: constitutional guarantees, an end to persecution of Labour and the Left, trial of those responsible for the Catavi scandal. Estensoro tells the press that he will restore complete freedom of association and speech for Labour and that his government advocates better wages, favours a social welfare programme and advocates co-operation with the United Nations. I quote all this to show the complexity of the position. Here, quite clearly, the revolutionaries have persuaded wide sections of the people of the honesty of their intentions. This demagogic programme has a superficial attraction. Yet behind all the speech-making and the promises are the real makers of the revolution: Estensoro, known to be in close touch with Ramirez and with the Nazi espionage system based on Buenos Aires, and Major Belmonte, exiled two years ago after participation in a plot organised by Ernst Wendler, Nazi Minister in Brazil. He then became Bolivian military attaché in Berlin, and it was reported that in December he had returned to Argentina via Portugal. What is the moral of this? The Nazis are able to use the genuine discontent caused by the stress of economic and political upheaval to instal puppet regimes. What is the Allied answer? Is South America to be another case of too little and too late?

Even in Hungary, the ruling clique still seem to think that after Germany is beaten they will have to transfer their friendship to a pro-Fascist Britain. How else could they sanction such anti-German attitudes as those which appear in the Ciano's obituary notices in Hungary? The Budapest press and the Budapest radio (both government controlled) refer affectionately to his memory, stressing Hungary's debt to the statesman who helped her reconquer lost territories. They do not conceal their disapproval of his execution. One paper wrote: "In a later generation the scaffold may become an altar, the coward become a hero and people who have been executed often worshipped like saints." Flamboyant praise of the now discredited champion of their revisionist policy? Yes, but unless Hungary's rulers were convinced that their position would be appreciated in Britain and America as well as resented by Hitler, it is unlikely that they would indulge their nostalgia. Do the Hungarians really think this insurance policy will mature at the peace settlement? If so, there must be something lacking in our propaganda.

* * *

A few months ago this journal published an interview with Councillor Awoonor-Renner, who looked forward to a federation of African States. This large issue is not within the terms of reference of the Commission headed by Walter Elliott, which is shortly to leave for West Africa. Its object is to study African education. But a Commission with so imaginative a head and so well informed and intelligent a personnel—it includes Julian Huxley and two able Vice-Chancellors—will necessarily find itself considering more than the details of the curriculum at Achimota. You can make no decisions about education without asking what education is for; and that is a peculiarly interesting question in an area which is not a white man's country and which may some day develop into the first modern African State. Liberia and Haiti have been unhappy precedents, but they have both been dogged with a slave inheritance, and though Liberia has been extensively exploited by whites, it has never received any disinterested physical or spiritual aid. The Commission should have a fascinating time, and if I know anything about its members, they will not be satisfied with a few aeroplane trips and conversations with officials, but will really take trouble to discover the needs and desires of Africans.

* * *

One of the less pleasant of war developments is the discovery by shrewd people that atrocities are popular. I note the publication of a book, copiously illustrated, of course, of Teutonic tortures through the ages. (The rack and the thumb-screw are presumably Germanic for the duration.) Again, my bus stopped the other day in London next to a placarded building inviting us all to see "The War in Wax! Life-size Figures! The German Concentration Camp!" And—a last special appeal—"Section for Children."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Jeffrey Dell.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Racing men fear invasion may cut programme.—Headline in *Daily Express*.

One thousand seven hundred girls have replied to the Mayor of Saffron Walden (Councillor Wilson), who recently appealed on behalf of a sailor who wanted girl pen friends "with a view to matrimony."—*News Chronicle*.

The Garrison Theatre for troops in Naples opened on Monday, and the sparkling revue, "So This is Naples," proved a success. Everybody who saw the show will agree that the entertainment was of a high standard, particularly when we consider that all the performers are Italian.—*Union Jack*.

Before your next motor coach outing or trip ask us for one of our books of suggested coach trips. Keen prices, servility and up-to-date coaches.—*Advt. in Local Guide, Keighley.*

An even more impressive incident took place at Salisbury on a Saturday in 1940 when two officers arrived on the racecourse after the second race, having walked the three and a half miles from the railway station. They had nothing but their battle-dress: the rest had gone on the roads that led to Dunkirk. They had borrowed a few shillings at the port where they had landed, they had seen in a paper that a meeting was being held at Salisbury, and they had set off without more ado. They were probably very tired, they were certainly very hungry, but what they wanted was not rest, nor food, nor sympathy—all they wanted was to know "would Owen Tudor win the third race?"—*The Times.*

ARMS AND THE MEN

Sir James Grigg has paid tribute in Parliament to Marshal Tito's great contribution to the war. At long last London and Washington have had to recognise that the popular resistance movement in Yugoslavia is militarily too valuable an asset to be neglected. Here the soldiers have overruled the diplomatists: some Allied supplies are now being sent to Marshal Tito notwithstanding his avowed determination to purge his country both of Axis collaborationists and of the feudal elements clinging to a discredited throne. But it would be wrong to conclude from this that the State Department and Foreign Office are now converted to a "progressive" view of war aims. Complaints from the French Resistance Movement that American arms are devoted liberally to re-equipping Giraud's colonial forces in Africa, whereas none or few reach the *maquis* in metropolitan France, though means of access are not lacking, still fall on deaf ears. In vain does General de Gaulle plead in Marrakesh with Mr. Churchill; in vain do the French ask why, when a few sticks of dynamite could do the job, the Allies prefer less effective and—in terms of French lives—infinitely more costly air bombing as a means of destroying submarine pens on the Atlantic coast, or viaducts on the Marseilles-Genoa railway. Why, indeed? Is it because the partisan group which won back Corsica was too Left in its political alignment? Because American Big Business, intent on preserving Europe as an orderly post-war market, proposes to reinstall a "reliable" Government in Paris—with the backing of Giraud's coloured troops and the prestige even, if need be, of Admiral Leahy's *bon ami* Petain? These things are said by Frenchmen who have deserved better than neglect by Washington and vicarious comminations from London through the mouth of General Smuts.

The most glaring example, however, of betrayal by Churchill and Roosevelt of the causes for which their soldiers and workers still imagine they are fighting is to be found in the case of Greece. Here, in a country whose peasant-soldiers' battle against Fascist aggression won the world's admiration, resistance to the enemy's occupation is represented in an overwhelming degree by E.L.A.S. forces. Their leadership—as in the case of the Yugoslav National Army of Liberation—is largely, though not exclusively, Communist, and finds no room, in its conception of peace aims, for a monarchical militarist clique whose pre-war prosperity was based on exploitation of peasant and urban workers. Starving, opposing German troops with nothing but rifles and a handful of cartridges, E.L.A.S. bands continue to resist. Supported by the Allies, whose command of the Greek seas is supreme, these partisans could be nearly as great an embarrassment to Germany as Tito's brigades. Yet, because King George, it seems, can pull strings more forcibly than King Peter, or because the Greece on whose post-war influence in the Mediterranean (jointly with that of Franco's Spain) the Foreign Office counts, must be "reliable," all supplies of food and munitions have been cut off from the Greek anti-Fascists. Our shabby pretext in that they would be used, in part, to liquidate the numerically inconsiderable forces under the flag of the Greek Mihailovitch, the "patriotic" defender of capital and landlordism, Colonel Zervas. Instead of arms, the Greeks are aided by bombs which plaster the Piraeus.

This policy is a logical continuance of our tactics in bombing the insurgent workers of Turin and Milan after the Duce's fall. It is now repeated in Bulgaria, whose capital we bomb while giving no aid or encouragement to the partisans in revolt against Prince Cyril's quisling Government. It will not forfeit our chance of victory; that would in any case be secured, sooner or later, by the preponderance of Allied material resources, even if the U.S.S.R. failed to win the war by her own efforts. What Britain and America, thanks to their governing class, stand in danger of losing is the ability to exercise any influence in Europe after the collapse of Germany. For their bombs and, it may be in the end, for their invading armies, the peoples of the Continent will feel a mixture of respect and horror. But the men who will rule the liberated countries after the Peace have met with too little in their relations with London and Washington save antipathy. This they will remember.

REFLECTIONS ON FRONTIERS

Frontiers are not the issue for which we are contending in this war. None the less, in the immense upheaval some territorial changes will be made. The first of them has been announced: Stalin has offered East Prussia to the Poles. This first precedent is disturbing. It springs from a crude conception of power-politics. Since the Poles must surrender their eastern borderland to Russia, they are promised compensation at Germany's expense. That the Poles are entitled to compensation for their cruel sufferings is manifest; but must it take the form of territory inhabited by an indisputably German population? Before public opinion assents, we ought to decide what principles, if any, are to guide us in adjusting territorial claims. On this matter the Atlantic Charter gave clear guidance. All the United Nations have adhered to it. It opens with the statement that they "seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other"; further, "they desire no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned."

Is there the smallest reason to suppose that any but a negligible number of East Prussians would wish to be annexed to Poland? By all the usual tests this population is Germanic, and has been so for seven centuries. In the days of free elections it never returned to Reichstag or Diet, as other regions did, a single member of a dissenting non-German minority. The aboriginal population of the Middle Ages was not Polish but Lithuanian, and it was absorbed by the Lutheran Reformation. Of East Prussia's inhabitants, 85 per cent. are Protestants. There is a minority of Polish origin, which speaks the Masurian dialect. Its allegiance was tested after the last war in two plebiscites conducted by the League of Nations: in one of them the majority for Germany was 92 per cent., and in the other 98 per cent. By the linguistic test, in the census of 1925, less than 3 per cent. of the whole population spoke a non-German language at home. By sentiment, history and culture this province is beyond cavil German. There is, indeed, no more Germanic city than Königsberg, with its Hansa traditions and its university, where Herder studied and Kant taught. With its population of a quarter of a million, it was always a Social-Democratic stronghold.

"But surely," said a friend of mine the other day, "we must tidy up the map." That, if we are socialists or democrats, is a secondary matter. Our first duty is to face the two and a quarter millions of this population, whose fate will one day depend on us and our Allies. More than most European peoples they are tied to the soil. This is a poor province, which lives by growing grain and breeding horses. It has only a few minor industries, based on timber. Nearly half of it works on the land—twice the average proportion prevailing in Germany. The big Junker estates cover 40 per cent. of the cultivated area. The ascendancy of this class makes a grave political problem, but it should not obscure for us the fact that the overwhelming mass of the agricultural population consists of peasant farmers and small-holders, deeply attached to the fields their fathers have tilled for centuries. The Junkers (meaning owners of more than 250 acres) are a negligible fraction of this population; they form only 1.3 per cent. of the cultivating holders of land. To get rid of this caste it is not necessary to drive out with them two million workers and peasants. They can be dealt with by breaking up or socialising their great estates, of which many are bankrupt.

The gravity of this East Prussian problem is that annexation will mean the expulsion in the mass of this population. Germans and Poles have seldom lived happily together; after the barbarism of the Nazi record in Poland they will find it impossible to do so. Even in the Corridor the big German minority had all but vanished under Polish rule. The Poles make no secret of their intentions. Their claims cover not merely East Prussia, but the Danzig territory, Lower Silesia (including Breslau, with its half-million inhabitants) and Upper Silesia—by which is meant the bigger portion of this province assigned to Germany after the League's plebiscite. All of these have indisputably German populations. It is not yet certain that all these demands have Russia's support; but they are backed by the Moscow Polish Committee. A German population of seven and a half millions is menaced by these claims. To these must be added the Germans whom the Czechs also threaten to expel—another two or three millions.

This plan would pack an additional ten million Germans into the reduced area of a smaller Reich. It cannot be done. Königsberg, Breslau and Pilsen could not be run, if they were literally emptied of Germans. But a needless migration even of three millions would aggravate intolerably the desperate problem of displaced populations with which UNRRA will have to deal.

Kindly people talk casually of the "exchange" of populations. In these cases no exchange is possible; there are no settled Polish or Czech populations in Germany proper which could be exchanged, nor is there vacant land which these peasants could reclaim. The result will be congestion, mass unemployment and a permanent lowering of the standard of life. That does not promise "freedom from want" for the rest of Europe, which cannot thrive if its central area is depressed. A more explosive political prescription could hardly be invented. These immigrants will be the prey of every agitator who promises to organise revenge.

The map, I concede, is "untidy." East Prussia is politically an island, cut off from the rest of Germany. The Corridor is a precarious salient, incapable of military defence. The Poles, for strategic and sentimental reasons, wish to consolidate their territory into a compact mass. They had already access to the Baltic by the Vistula water, through Danzig and Gdynia, but they want the coast of East Prussia also—sand-dunes and shallows though it is. In short, the map drawn at Versailles lacked shape. Two solutions are possible. If it is primarily at security the Poles aim, East Prussia might be neutralised and demilitarised, and a small international garrison stationed in it. It would then become rather a hostage for Germany's good behaviour than a threat to the Poles. They might also acquire by lease docks in Königsberg and Pillau. A simpler solution would be to exchange East Prussia for the Corridor and Danzig, which would return to the Reich. This means a transfer of populations, but in this case a genuine exchange is possible.

Poland must in this event retain her rights of navigation over the Vistula with leased docks at Danzig and Gdynia. This solution involves two migrations; but it could be shaped into a fair exchange, which both parties might accept as final. It would yield a tidy map and in the military sense a better frontier.

Frontiers, migrations, symmetrical maps—why should such things interest us? Violent solutions of this kind are distasteful to most of us; they belong to an old world which has gone for ever. The neatest of frontiers will add nothing worth mentioning to Poland's security. That depends on her ability to live in friendship with her great Eastern neighbour. We shrug our shoulders when anyone mentions frontiers. We want to be rid of barriers and customs houses and with them of barracks. What we want to do is to integrate Europe, and to organise across frontiers that grow steadily less visible and less exclusive the creative co-operation of all its peoples in their economic and cultural activities. Europe will be safe only when we are all collaborating to raise each other's standards of life—to double the productivity of Polish soil, to harness the water-power of the Danube, to employ the half-starved peasantry of the Balkans in new industries, to utilise for the common good the science of German technicians. Certainly the wrongs of the Poles must be righted, but not by reviving the feudal claims of medieval kings. Rather it should be done by planting a mill here and a steel works there; by irrigating this region and draining that; by aiding this crushed and neglected peasantry to draw a doubled reward from its toil. What we want from the Germans by way of amends to the Poles is not territory but machines, electrical equipment, fertilisers. And so, while Stalin redraws the map, we keep silence. Maps are not our affair.

By this indifference we of the forward-looking parties are risking all the creative ends we hope to attain. The first danger is that Europe will be divided sharply into two spheres of interest, one dependent on Moscow, the other on Washington and London. It will be a miracle if any integration for economic and cultural purposes can be arranged across the super-frontier that divides these zones. The other danger arises from proposals of which the uncompensated annexation of East Prussia is a typical instance. Behind us lie the immeasurable wrongs the corrupted German master-race has done to all of us, and more especially to the Slavs. But our task, if we can rise to it, is to plan without passion or hate the European society of to-morrow, knowing full well that it will crash, unless we can include the Germans in it as co-operating members.

Will they co-operate, while they are brooding over East Prussia? If our aim is that no new immorality, based on racial egoism, shall ever capture the German mind again, dare we present the fanatics with a case as sound as this? By no honest code of political morals can this annexation be justified. It sweeps away, by its violation of the Atlantic Charter, any belief that we are building the new world on disinterested principles. It is something worse than an injury to a nation: it means ruin to two million workers and peasants. We talk, not always wisely, of our plans to re-educate the Germans and restore in their twisted minds some sense of international community. What we do in the settlement will influence them more profoundly than all our precepts. The younger generation in Germany went astray between the two world wars because, when it looked around, it saw that it lived in a jungle. What kind of environment is this, then, that we are preparing for its younger brothers? Bismarck wrecked the hope of European peace for two generations by annexing Alsace. Let us beware lest we do the same thing in East Prussia. Frontiers matter when they set going a *perpetuum mobile* of resentment and strife. One day the Labour Party will have to meet again its former comrades, the Socialist workers of Königsberg. What will it answer when, as homeless migrants, they quote the Atlantic Charter?

H. N. Brailsford

LISTENING TO THE B.B.C.

II.—THE "ERSATZ" PROGRAMME.

Last week I discussed that vast radio audience which hears the B.B.C. programmes as a background noise, but does not listen to them, and I pointed out the very considerable provision which the B.B.C. makes for this type of audience in its curtailed war-time programmes.

It is now time to turn to the programmes provided by the Corporation for the attentive listener. But first of all, let us get rid of one illusion. The distinction between hearing a radio programme and listening to a radio programme is not the distinction between lowbrows and highbrows. Programmes which can only be appreciated if they are listened to with attention can and do vary to suit all tastes. Tommy Handley in "Itma" is lowbrow: John Gielgud in 95 minutes' worth of *Pilgrim's Progress* is extremely highbrow. Both need the closest attention for full enjoyment and both are most distracting for use as background noise. The suggestion, therefore, that the B.B.C. should not provide so much background noise is not a highbrow suggestion; it is a proposal that the B.B.C. should cater for its listeners.

I have spent some time trying to classify the output of the B.B.C. Such classification must always be arbitrary, and the best I could manage is as follows:

1. News, news commentaries, Government notices and propaganda.
2. Light entertainment.
3. Children's education and entertainment.
4. Religion and religious instruction.
5. Serious music.
6. Dramatic features.
7. Practical information, e.g. Radio Doctor, Middleton on Gardening, Houghton in "May I Help You?"
8. Special audiences, e.g. Gaelic, Welsh, News to Canadian soldiers.
9. Serious discussion, e.g. Brains Trust, talks.

My first impression, after ten weeks' listening alone in my bedroom is this: the less I am overhearing something which can only be appreciated properly in a Music Hall, a Concert Hall, a Church, the better. Even more violently I feel that the less the B.B.C. makes you listen to what should properly be seen in the cinema or read in a book, the better. Or put it another way. The more genuinely *radio* a programme is, the more I enjoy it. Looking back over the last ten weeks, what stands out in my memory? Tommy Handley, Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill, *Alice in Wonderland*, the Radio Doctor, the Christmas round the World Programme (though it was very dull this year), Raymond Gram Swing, Freddie Grisewood's "The World Goes By" (a sort of radio news magazine), a talk by John Betjemann on second-hand book shops, the radio version of "Ladies in Retirement," David Low being blown back through time to the Napoleonic wars, Priestley illustrating his understanding of Dickens, Welsh Rarebit (an excellent piece of radio variety), Appointment with Fear (some exciting radio horrific). I have deliberately jotted down that list in no sort of order, as it came into my head.

I do not think that this chance list of remembered programmes is biased either towards the highbrow or the lowbrow. But there is one omission in it. I have not included any classical music. Classical music, unlike the programmes I have listed, is not pure radio, but something far better heard and far better enjoyed in the concert hall. I am not among those who think that the B.B.C. gives us too little classical music, and I sometimes wonder how many of those who press the B.B.C. to increase its classical transmissions actually listened to, say, the performance of "The Flying Dutchman," which filled two hours of high peak listening one evening between 7 and 9 p.m. I did, and although I have seen performances of "The Flying Dutchman," and despite the fact that I was alone, I found it hard to keep my attention on the music.

I do not know whether my experience is shared by others—namely that concentration on serious broadcast music is far more difficult than concentration in a concert hall. I have also found that, whereas one can enjoy broadcast performances of music one knows well, I can make nothing of broadcast performances of new music which one has never heard—the new Stravinsky Symphony, for instance, which the B.B.C. has recently broadcast no less than twice. It is at least worth suggesting that music lovers—and churchgoers—should take care lest broadcasting, instead of increasing appreciation of good music and religious worship, actually waters them down. At least in the case of religious worship I find it hard to believe that broadcasting is not positively harmful. To be given the excuse of going to church without taking the trouble to leave a nice hot fire, or to stop drinking one's tea, can do nothing but harm to religion. Yet religious services take up a large proportion of B.B.C. time.

This criticism can be applied more widely. The vast majority of B.B.C. programmes are *ersatz*—substitutes for going to church, substitutes for going to school, substitutes for going to concerts, substitutes for going to the theatre, to the opera, to the music hall, or worst of all, substitutes for reading books on dull subjects. And this despite the admitted fact that a genuine radio programme like Tommy Handley is far more popular than the usual variety programme in which the listener merely overhears a variety show in a music hall. And what is true of variety is true of every other medium.

My second major criticism is that the highbrows and the lowbrows get too much and the middlebrows too little. I have mentioned already the preponderant share claimed by second-rate variety programmes and "background noise" music. It is worth noticing, however, that when the B.B.C. "goes serious," the pendulum is inclined to swing too violently the other way. I happened to enjoy *Pilgrim's Progress* because it is a childhood book, but surely 95 minutes of it on Christmas Sunday evening at the peak listening time is a bit steep! And again on New Year's Eve, we had half an hour of a Louis Macneice programme, which seemed to me pure coterie stuff.

The audience which gets a raw deal is that enormously important section of *all* classes which, in the world of literature, makes Shaw and Wells and Priestley and Hogben best sellers—in fact, those not particularly aesthetic but mentally alert people, who prefer plays to classical music, and go to church when they want religion. This is the group on which democracy depends. What does the B.B.C. provide for it? The answer is precious little, beyond the Brains Trust, a few features by producers like Stephen Potter, and some topical commentaries.

While Europe and the Empire are mentally stimulated by the B.B.C., such education and entertainment are not provided for the home audience. Odder still, Home talks are years behind Empire and European talks from a technical point of view. The Home talk is usually a long slab of words. There are better ways to stimulate middle-brow thought than paying an expert, with no radio personality, to read aloud for 20 minutes before a microphone.

I see that it is rumoured that the B.B.C. will substitute its Overseas for the Forces Programme. This will be an improvement, but an even better reform would be to substitute the Overseas Talks and Features staff for the present Home Talks staff.

Let me repeat, what I have written is merely personal impressions of a listener who has a great deal to be thankful for. Every day he has read himself to sleep to the accompaniment of a pleasant background noise, and almost everyday he has found something of genuine interest to listen to. But he has learned that radio could be made into a new unique medium of entertainment and of education—and this discovery arouses an inevitable impatience with the *ersatz* programme and the background noise, which at present dominate B.B.C. output for us here in Britain.

R. H. S. Crossman

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PLEASURES OF CREDULITY

How many of our pleasures we owe throughout life to credulity! We begin with such figments as Father Christmas and his descent of the chimney. To have been a rationalist at the age of four would have been like having been born tone-deaf or colour-blind—incapable of visiting the territory of the miraculous. In our nurseries we believe in Jack the Giant-killer long before we believe in William the Conqueror, and accept Cinderella, her fairy godmother, her coach, and her glass slipper as pieces of an admirably ordered universe. Perhaps, even at the age at which we begin to read fairy tales, we have already become half-sceptics, and, if pressed on the point, might admit that we do not quite believe that the events related in the stories ever happened. Even so, we remain boundlessly credulous as we read. With a book of fairy tales in our hands, we no more think of doubting the truth of "Beauty and the Beast" than we should think of doubting that the man in the moon was put there as a punishment for gathering sticks on Sunday, that a thunderstorm meant that God was angry, or that you could catch a swallow by putting salt on the end of its tail. (I speak, of course, of the children of an earlier era whose credulities differed from the credulities of to-day.)

As we grow older, however, we still cling to the pleasures of credulity. Much of the popular fiction of the nineteenth century owed its vogue to the genius of the novelists in imposing on the credulity of their readers. Happy endings were the sweetmeats of the age. In penny novelettes dukes in disguise wooed and won girls of humble station and lived happily ever after. Impossible heroes performed impossible feats, like that god-like guardsman in Ouida's *Under Two Flags* who could sit up gambling all night, manhandle a powerful cad the next morning, and then, cool as a cucumber, ride his horse to victory in a steeplechase. It is nearly three-quarters of a lifetime since I read *Under Two Flags,* but I still remember the exquisite pleasure of wallowing in credulity as I followed the fortunes of that young hero, possessing almost all the worldly gifts worth having and sacrificing them all rather than that a woman's good name should suffer. Perhaps Ouida's plot is just as credible as that of the *Odyssey.* A large part of the pleasures of the imagination in all ages can be attributed to our credulity about the incredible.

How strong is the will to believe is shown in the extraordinary stories related throughout the ages even by the most learned of men. I picked up a volume of Pliny's *Natural History* in the Loeb Library the other day, and, as I turned over the pages, it struck me that here was a man of science who was almost as credulous as I myself used to be in the nursery in Elmwood Avenue. As he approaches the description of some of the more fantastic races of mankind—the sort of people whose heads grow beneath their shoulders—he even warns the readers against excessive incredulity. "For who," he asks, "ever believed in the Ethiopians before actually seeing them? Or what is not deemed miraculous when first it comes into knowledge? How many things are judged impossible before they occur?" From this, he goes on to describe, as a modern journalist might describe the jet propelled aeroplane or some other new wonder, tribes of human beings in whose existence I should have thought it impossible that any man of science could ever have believed. For example: "In a certain large valley in the Himalayas there is a region called Abarimon where are some people dwelling in forests who have their feet turned backward behind their legs, who run extremely fast and range abroad over the country with the wild animals."

I can believe rather more easily in the Arimaspi, who have only one eye in the centre of the forehead, and who "wage continual war around their mines with griffins, a kind of wild beast with wings, as commonly reported, that digs gold out of mines, which the creatures guard and the Arimaspi try to take from them, both with remarkable covetousness," or in certain women of Scythia whose distinguishing marks were "a double pupil in one eye and the likeness of a horse in the other"; but I find it hard to believe in the Astomi tribe (living near the source of the Ganges) that "has no mouth and a body hairy all over; they dress in cotton wool, and live only on the air they breathe and the scent they inhale through their nostrils; they have no food or drink except the different odours of the roots and flowers and wild apples which they carry with them on their longer journeys so as not to lack a supply of meat." It may be, of course, that a member of the Astomi tribe would be incredulous if he were told that there were people dwelling near the source of the Thames who live as modern Londoners do. Even the habit of puffing smoke out of the mouth must seem odd to a distant stranger who has only heard of it.

Let us then not be over-sceptical. After all, few of us have the brains of Pliny, and he apparently was able to believe in the existence of a tribe of men called the Monocoli "who have only one leg and who move in jumps with surprising speed." And, to give a little further colour to his story, he adds: "The same are called the Umbrella-foot tribe, because in the hotter weather they lie on their backs on the ground and protect themselves with the shadow of their feet." Why doubt this any more than we doubt that Caesar "used to write or read and dictate or listen simultaneously, and to dictate to his secretaries four letters at once on his important affairs—and, if otherwise unoccupied, seven letters at once"? Pliny makes both statements, and Pliny writes with some authority. Fortunately, credulity can never die. How eagerly in our own time the world—and not only the unlearned world—drank in the strange stories of Louis de Rougemont!

After such extraordinary examples of credulity about the world in which he had so extensively travelled, it seems odd that Pliny should become completely incredulous when he discusses the possible existence of another world—an after-life—in which beings no stranger than the members of the Umbrella-foot tribe live for ever. He can believe almost anything about the remote parts of the earth, and one would have imagined that he ought to be able to believe still more easily in the wonders of the undiscovered country variously described by the religions of mankind. At the thought of a future life, however, he becomes a pure sceptic. "All men," he declares boldly, "are in the same state from their last day onward as they were before their first day, and neither body nor mind possesses any sensation after death any more than it did before birth," and he scoffs at the vanity that makes "a god of one who has already ceased to be a man—just as if man's mode of breathing were in any way different from that of the other animals." He appears, indeed, to have had a Swinburnian passion for death as the end of all things.

Sudden death he describes as "life's supreme happiness," giving as examples of happy endings the two Caesars who died while putting their shoes on in the morning, Gnaeus Baebius Pamphilius, who died just after asking his footman the time, Aulus Manlius Torquatus, who died while helping himself to cake at dinner, and Appius Saufeius, who died "sucking an egg after coming back from the bath-house."

With these examples in his mind, Pliny becomes impatient of the suggestion that a man who had enjoyed the supreme felicity of dying while sucking an egg on his way back from the bath-house should have to start life all over again in another world. "Plague take it," he writes, "what is his mad idea that life is renewed by death? What repose are the generations to have if the soul retains permanent sensation in the upper world and the ghost in the lower? Assuredly, this sweet but credulous fancy ruins nature's chief blessing, death."

On this matter, I confess, Pliny and I are poles apart. Credulous though I am about this world, I am still more credulous about the other one. Not, perhaps, about its accoutrements—golden pavements, harps, wings and so forth—but about its existence. I can believe almost anything except that the universe came into existence as the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. That man should be immortal does not seem to me a very odd possibility in a mysterious universe, and, from the point of view of pure reason, there seems to me to be no more to be said for disbelieving it than for believing it. The truth is, whatever we believe about man's state after death, we are bound to be a little credulous—credulously believing either that at death life is blown out like a candle or that, though the body dies, the soul survives. Different ages have different forms of credulity—in one age it is called faith, in another it is called rationalism. In any case we who know so little are bound to be credulous about many things. Man without credulity, surely, would lose not only much of his happiness, but much of his mental and imaginative liveliness.

Y. Y.

A GREAT PATRON

THE patron, now rarely in a position to deserve the author's homage or abuse, has not yet ceased to be useful to the painter. Probably his function will be taken over by public bodies, but it is not certain that this change will be as satisfactory to the artist as to the sociologist. An individual can take risks more easily than a committee—he has to fear neither the censure of the press nor the Philistinism of a bureaucracy. It it not always an instructed and courageous taste that places a man on the board of a museum or that makes him its director. (In London we are at the moment fortunate, but there is no reason why this good fortune must continue.) On the other hand, who can claim that the private patronage of painters has in our lifetime been a success? The trouble is not that patrons have been exacting or tasteless, but that there have been so few of them. The rich, who from the Medicis to the Beaumonts and Egremonts of a century ago, gave encouragement, moral as well as material, to artists of genius, have frivolously abandoned a function that provides a principal excuse for their existence. They have lavished money on hospitals and universities—a duty that could be performed equally well by public bodies—but with few exceptions they have rigorously refrained from patronising contemporary painters and sculptors. Their only activity in the field of art has been occasionally to sell a portrait by Gainsborough or to buy one by Laszlo. Sir Michael Sadler was one of the rare exceptions to this lamentable rule. He was never rich as the manufacturers of motor-cars and cigarettes reckon riches. But he bought works of art with indefatigable enterprise and gusto. He never considered whether a picture was likely to appreciate in value: he bought not only what he admired (and this was as a rule extraordinarily good) but works by young and unknown painters who if encouraged might some day produce what he would admire. His understanding, no less than his purse, was immeasurably helpful to artists. If there had been twenty—even ten—such patrons in England, the history of our contemporary painting might have been far brighter: one of the most accomplished and imaginative painters alive, for instance, would not need a Civil List pension.

Sir Michael Sadler's collection was large, but the selection from it now being shown and sold at the Leicester Galleries contains most of his important acquisitions except that it does not represent adequately his interest in early nineteenth-century painting, Constable, Girtin, Cotman. Mr. John Piper, in an excellent foreword to the catalogue, pays a tribute based on experience to Sir Michael as "friend and encourager." During the slump when artists could not sell their pictures, and many collectors had to sell theirs, Sir Michael continued to buy, in some instances saving the situation for a painter or even for a dealer. Mr. Piper emphasises also the good spirits and warm human feelings, which, added to his enterprise and taste, made Sir Michael an exemplary patron.

His taste was wide and unbiased by fashion; Millet, Carrière, Michel, Ribot, all now too generally neglected, are represented beside the more prized names. A wonderful but unshowy Delacroix sketch pays tribute to the uncommon sensibility of the collector, as do a little Rouault landscape and the most covetable Paul Klee I have ever seen. (A few pale triangular forms on a shimmer of variegated blue. This might represent the ultimate fineness to which the art of painting can aspire, the visual equivalent of a late poem by Mallarmé.) The Picasso *nature morte* is one of the painter's masterpieces. The Sickert *Pheasant*, the unfinished Modigliani, the Matisse landscape, the Bonnard *Cat*, are all exquisite and in the highest degree "painterly." The Gertler and the Henry Lamb represent these artists at their best; there are fine specimens of Frances Hodgkins, David Jones, Henry Moore, W. Roberts, Duncan Grant, Ben Nicholson, Winifred Nicholson, Matthew Smith and John Piper. And these are only a few of the living English painters who won his appreciation and support.

In France and the United States there have been a number of patrons in the 20th century no less enlightened and courageous than Sir Michael Sadler. Once the English rich were the most famous of collectors. Why have they degenerated? In the nineteenth century, it is true, they bought a lot of fashionable pictures by Royal Academy painters that are now worth only the gold on their frames; and probably this has had a discouraging effect. One can argue also that the best visual art of this century has been usually hermetic or at any rate difficult to approach. Whereas the great painters of the past usually pleased their patrons, whether ecclesiastic, aristocratic or bourgeois, at least in the choice of subject, twentieth-century artists have found this too grave a concession. Inevitably, if often unconsciously, they expressed in the content of their pictures a contempt for the values still cherished by the wealthy. Consequently they have, in this country, been appreciated only by those with a profound love of art for art's sake. And such persons have been found among writers, Civil Servants and professional men rather than among the nobility or the *nouveaux riches*. But this is past history. The problem now is not to educate the patron, but to find an adequate substitute. And that is a matter for very deep consideration.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Drive to the West," at the Tatler

Once again, a couple of score cameramen have gone out to make a record of Russian victories. This film is "the same" as those of Leningrad and Stalingrad in the sense that one battle or devastated countryside or civilian trek is like another. The repetition of such scenes does not lessen their tragedy. *The Drive to the West* begins with a German offensive and the counter-attack opens out into the advance that recaptured Orel and Byelgorod. Tanks creep out of woods; cavalry ford a river; the barrage piles up an edifice of smoke in the distance; and everywhere infantrymen run forward across cornfields, prise Germans out of dug-outs, advance from house to house in village or town. Especially one remembers the tanks rumbling into Orel and the men and women from a Gestapo prison, many of them crippled, limping forward to meet them. There are two other films in the Tatler programme, both worth staying for. A Rotha production, *Power for the Highlands*, makes a strong and eloquent appeal for the hydro-electric power scheme, sanctioned by Parliament, without perhaps allowing enough for arguments on the other side. *Spring Song* is a "musical" about a girl making good in operetta; as the genre goes, it is charming but undistinguished, not so good as Clair, though better than almost any Hollywood "musical," except their all-Negro shows.

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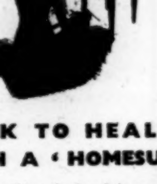

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"Hommage à Le Nain," at the Lefevre

No sensible critic wastes time on the thousands of feeble pictures that are shown annually in London. But the current exhibition at the Lefevre calls for a moment's attention by its exceptional pretentiousness and bad taste. A painter has taken figures and designs from Le Nain and served them in a sauce designed to be *piquante*, half surrealism, half millinery. The results may astonish the usual frequenters of the Lefevre Galleries, but will doubtless commend themselves to persons who enjoy jazz versions of Chopin and Schubert.

GENERAL JULIANA

Princess Juliana has made all arrangements to come over at a moment's notice, although her arrival here would not necessarily indicate an immediate invasion.—Prince Bernard. *News Chronicle*, January 18th.

THOUGH U.S. Generals race to this mighty island base,
Though Churchill lands to re-direct the storm,
Though Monty's eagle gaze maps the battle's final phase
And experts estimate invasion form,
These scenes of animation give no certain indication
That the Second Front is very nearly due,
And we are not more enlightened, though expectancy is heightened,
Now that Princess Juliana's coming too.

It is doubtless rash to guess that the Netherlands princess
Will give the final signal to invade,
But this item now in print, gives the broadest kind of hint
That her final dispositions have been made,
And while nothing is revealed in the military field,
Juliana will arrive to play her part,
Inviting the reflection that this may have some connection
With the great offensive just about to start.

Princess Juliana's coming will set busy rumour humming,
Though her role is left intentionally vague,
And the statement may not mean that Holland's future queen
Will lead liberating armies to the Hague.
We must comment with restraint for the move may be a feint
Though it comes from an authoritative source,
And may well imply that soon they will send up the balloon,
When the family of Orange lands in force.

For those who look for signs and read between the lines
This secret, royal and strategic flight
May not be the occasion for the great Allied invasion,
But it has to be admitted that it might.
There may be some understanding that Juliana's landing
Will the moment of decision nearer bring—
Her arrival may portend the beginning of the end,
On the other hand, it may not mean a thing.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

FAMINE IN EUROPE

SIR,—For some months the question of limited and controlled relief to the accessible countries of Europe—and more particularly for Belgium—has been discussed in this country and in the United States.

The British Famine Relief Committee, sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the late Cardinal Hinsley, have presented a Memorandum to the Government, urging that steps should be taken immediately to protect the younger generation. Meetings have been held all over the country adopting resolutions in support of this policy. In America a similar movement of opinion has taken place and has been strengthened by recent political developments. Nevertheless, both the British and the American Governments, in spite of their sympathy for the sufferings of the oppressed peoples, have found it impossible to bring about any relaxation in the blockade, with the sole exception of Greece.

It would not be helpful at this stage to discuss "might-have-beens"; what is more helpful is to examine whether the request for navicerts made by the Belgian Government, and supported by important sections of British and American opinion, should be reconsidered in the light of recent military events. Whether we take the more optimistic view that the Western countries will be liberated in the course of the spring or the more conservative view that they may be liberated a few months later, the course of the war evidently shows that we are on the brink of great events, and that the conquered peoples, who have been living for three years in conditions verging on starvation, may soon receive abundant supplies. Considering the rapid progress made on the battlefields, should we reach the conclusion that all efforts made to obtain immediate relief on a small scale should come to an end?

It would be dangerous to answer rashly in the affirmative. Before the hour of liberation strikes the people of the occupied countries will still have to wait for several months. The winter is not over and cold may bring catastrophic results among populations whose resistance to disease has been dangerously lowered, and who for a large majority are reduced to rations which only provide half the minimum of food required. Most of these occupied countries, particularly Belgium, are desperately short of coal, most of the production being requisitioned by the enemy, and as experience shows, lack of fuel increases not only suffering, but the rapid spreading of diseases, such as tuberculosis.

According to official statistics the number of registered cases of advanced tuberculosis in Belgium has increased from 69,000 in December, 1941, to 109,500 in February, 1943. All medical reports from schools, hospitals and charity organisations show that the children are particularly affected, and it is not an exaggeration to say that in industrial districts two-thirds of them are either tubercular or threatened with tuberculosis. All doctors know that diseases caused by malnutrition cannot be cured only by medicine. It is true that medicaments are allowed through the blockade, but they cannot be effective unless the ration of people threatened by these diseases is appreciably increased. That is why the Medical Sub-Committee of the Famine Relief Committee requested that 2,000 tons of vitamins and powdered milk should be allowed through the blockade, placed under the control of the International Red Cross, after proper guarantees had been obtained from the enemy, and reserved for the children, the nursing mothers and the sick. As far as Belgium is concerned, it has been made clear by the Belgian Prime Minister that there would be no difficulty in realising this scheme as far as money and shipping are concerned. It might be more difficult to obtain to-day the necessary supplies, but that is no reason why the effort should not be made.

Just as the critical military situation was a powerful argument against any relaxation of the blockade at the beginning of the war, the distinctly favourable situation of to-day is a powerful argument in favour of granting this request at the present stage. This may be our last chance of strengthening the morale of the conquered people before all communications are disorganised by the opening of a second front, and this visible proof of good will would do more to achieve this purpose than the most eloquent propaganda. For over three

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ears the patriots in occupied countries have not only sisted the inducements of the enemy to submit to a ated regime, but have given their freedom and life to upport the war effort of the United Nations through abotage and other pro-allied activities, among which he help given to British airmen compelled to bale out n these countries should not be overlooked. The list f people shot in Belgium alone during the present ccupation is already more than ten times larger than hat of the victims of the occupation of 1914-1918, *and considerable proportion of these martyrs have lost their ves because they sheltered British airmen and gave them e means of escaping*. At the moment, when a last call s about to be made on these patriots to support the ction of the troops which will shortly liberate their erritory, everything should be done to relieve them f their gravest anxiety, which is obviously the fate f their women and children.

It seems, therefore, that if a favourable solution ould shortly be found for this cruel problem, such a olution would not only give great satisfaction to mportant sections of British and American opinion, ut also increase the war effort instead of weakening it. t would also incidentally save thousands of precious ives, and attentuate the morbid conditions of the ounger generation. We have reached a moment when e can at last look ahead to the future work of recontruction, and it is ultimately on the younger generation f the countries ravaged and starved by cruel conquest nd occupation that the success of this reconstruction epends.

E. CAMMAERTS

SKIPTON

SIR,—There are at least three reasons which support our leader on the Skipton by-election and the dmirable letter you print from Mrs. Jo Bailey. The mportant thing is that Labour should declare itself ow in favour of fighting the next General Election n a Socialist programme untrammelled by any oalition with the Conservative Party. The first eason is that the situation is rapidly deteriorating. n the occupied countries, hunger, misery and murder re increasingly driving men to desperation and evenge; even in our own country there are clear ndications of a moral decline, due mainly to the fact hat men and women suffer from the effects of pro-nged war and our leaders have failed to hold out ny hopes of a better world for them. Secondly, to ct now clearly implies a change in the national ortunes. The Conservative policy is simply to win he war and to leave reforms to such as are forced pon the still privileged classes in the community, oth here and abroad. The policy of resisting Hitler as, perhaps, good enough in 1940. It is quite nadequate in 1944. The onus is on Labour to show that a change in the national fortunes since 1940 has occurred. I believe that Labour can discharge this onus. Thirdly, there is the possibility, which we ought to face, that if Labour came out now for its own programme this might result in the break-up of the present coalition before the end of the war and the formation of a Parliamentary opposition. Would this be a disadvantage? I submit that it would not. The appeal for national unity as a ground for supporting the present coalition is largely misconceived. In a democracy unity does not mean that everyone should think alike. That way lies frustration. Unity means that the majority should agree on certain fundamentals—the safety of the realm, the proper representation of the people in Parliament, the advantage of health over sickness, and the like. It does not mean that all should be agreed on the methods of attaining these ends. The idea that we can get anywhere without controversy is an illusion and the sooner real controversy is restored in Parliament the better. The formation of a parliamentary opposition might therefore create greater unity than we have at present and is a possibility that Labour should welcome rather than fear.

WILLIAM C. SEARLE.

SIR,—The letter from Mrs. Jo Bailey, of Common Wealth, printed in your last issue is extremely interesting, and, may I say, encouraging. The result of the Skipton by-election is, as you remark in your editorial, a portent, and illustrates the great discontent among the common people, the electorate. The electoral truce is as dead as mutton, dead and damned. It is ludicrous and idiotic to expect any progressive thinking person, with a memory of its past record, to vote for a Tory candidate. The experiences Mrs. Bailey describes she enjoyed in the constituency illustrate further this sense of frustration that is felt, and show the solution with a clarity that cannot be ignored. Any progressive candidate, with a comprehensive programme of post-war promises, naturally gets the votes. This is indeed obvious. And we, of the Left, cannot, must not, let the people, our supporters, down by letting slip this opportunity!

As a Communist I cannot, naturally, accept Common Wealth and its programme but, ridding my mind of personal political bias, I welcome its advent and its success as a symptom of a disease; and as something bold, progressive, and concrete. I had the pleasure of witnessing Sir Richard Acland's exchange with Eden, over the issue of the Skipton writ, in the House on December 15th last, and observed, with satisfaction, the support he received from Labour Members. As a former member of the Labour Party (resigned in dissatisfaction) I venture to suggest that Transport House and the Party bosses have lost their grip on the vital issues of the present day, and are blissfully slumbering behind the barricades of the electoral truce. The rank and file of Socialists, however, are awake! Until the Labour Party realise this, and put an end to this monstrosity of a truce, they are bound to be "out of the picture." And this will be fatal, and the fears of thousands of loyal followers will be confirmed!

Mrs. Bailey's appeal to "all progressive parties of the Left" will probably be ignored, but it deserves urgent and immediate consideration. For unless we can achieve a unity of the Left we are doomed to failure. Illustrate—the Labour Party's narrow, biased, prejudiced attitude over Communist affiliation! Will they ever learn? Prejudice we must sweep aside, bias must be banished from our minds! Unity, our first aim, is within our grasp!

Because I am a Communist, because I believe in the Marxian conception of Socialism, I criticise but do not condemn all other Leftish Parties to hell and worse, but unite with them, and great, immense and far-reaching can be our achievements.

PETER A. ELLIS

THE ELECTORAL TRUCE

SIR,—

> *Those who really intend progressive government in this country should discard the fatal policy of recrimination and division within the Left.*

I heartily endorse these words in your current issue. The real trouble, I submit, is not that the leaders of the Labour Party are reactionary and muddle-headed, as you frequently seem to imply in your comments, nor that the extreme Left is irresponsible and intransigent as is often stated by others. It is that both sections are representative of public opinion as held not merely by different people but by the same people in different moods. It is, of course, no new thing for men and women to cling tenaciously to opinions whose implications are mutually inconsistent.

Progressives are united in demanding a new world after the war. They are confident that they are supported in this by a majority of the electorate, and they want this tested out and registered at the earliest opportunity. The logic of this is that every by-election occurring to-day should be fought even if a general election has to wait.

But the same progressives are passionately determined that the war shall be won as quickly as possible. The logic of this is that there must be the maximum of national unity. I am aware that it is argued that the continuance of the Coalition is not essential to national unity and, further, that electoral contests

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between the major parties would not necessarily break up the Coalition. But neither of these contentions carries general acceptance.

As I see it, therefore, your question whether Labour's share in the Coalition has influenced British policy in the last twelve months (which you and I would answer differently) is really irrelevant to the main issue, which is how to reconcile these conflicting tendencies in the Left. This will not be done (as you and I agree) by recrimination, nor by action which appears to many to be jeopardising victory, nor by tacit acquiescence in Tory plans to restore the pre-war order. It will only be done if we get together *now* to formulate our post-war policy and to expound it on every available opportunity, and if we proceed to lay our plans *now* to fight the issue out in the country as soon after the end of the war as may be expedient. F. W. PETHICK-LAWRENCE

11 Old Square,
Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2.

MR. ATTLEE

SIR,—With a refreshing scorn for angelic deference, James Walker rushes in and exposes the skeleton he would hide, seeking comfort from the dead which is denied him by the living. "Thinking of leadership in terms that are now out of date"—once a leader always a leader—he asserts that "the Parliamentary Labour Party year after year honours . . . Attlee by unanimous re-election." He is on thinner ground than "Critic" here, and in face of living facts his logic is not merely rickety, it is pediculous.

We "elected" Attlee only because the majority were divided between Morrison and Greenwood. There has been no "re-election" in any true sense.

The rule which requires the nominee's consent also, by a silly treacherous convention, compels his refusal to oppose the leader. In 1938, on my motion, the Party discussed the whole issue, and Attlee summed up the feeling in his appeal to members to break this convention and in future to go to a vote. The war intervened, and for no good reason the *status quo ante bellum* is maintained.

Attlee has more good qualities than most men I know, but that indefinable thing leadership is not one of them. I know of very few men in the Party who pretend otherwise. Of four possible leaders our opponents will bid high for two. With head synchronised to heart, the Party would elect Herbert Morrison for precisely the same reason that the Tories accepted Winston Churchill. I for one would accept from him a rod of iron in preference to favours from less competent men.

2 Caxton Street, ALFRED EDWARDS
S.W 1.

[We learn that the James Walker (of Glasgow) whose letter we published last week was not Jimmy Walker, M.P. for Motherwell].

PRISONERS OF WAR

SIR,—The recent suicides of two anti-Nazi German prisoners in an American camp should surely have aroused a widespread public demand for detailed information about what is being done to educate and enlighten German prisoners of war in this country.

People here seem to believe comfortably that "the Government must be looking after it," yet I was told recently that in fact the Government is doing very little beyond the mere routine of ensuring that prisoners are kept within the barbed wire. Rabid Nazis in the camps are permitted to impose their views and a certain amount of subterranean discipline upon the minority of anti-Nazi prisoners.

Without necessarily accepting this assertion as truth, I could at once see the danger of allowing thousands of Germans in our very midst to remain Nazis in faith, presumably to be dumped back in their own country after the war, veritable dragon's-teeth of Hitlerism.

It isn't presumptuous to ask for an assurance that everything possible is being done—by lectures, films, discussion classes, etc.—to cut out from the minds of these youths the cancer of National Socialist ideology, restoring to them a saner and healthier outlook which will enable them to help in the construction of a finer Germany after the war.

1 Foundry View, L. J. KNIGHTS
Godreaman, Aberdare.

COST OF PRODUCTION

SIR,—The Minister of Fuel and Power announced recently that factories and industrial establishments were to suffer a 10 per cent. cut in their coal deliveries, and at the same time a warning was issued against making inroads on reserve stock-piles. As most factories have presumably effected all possible fuel economies by now, this means a 10 per cent. cut in production in many plants; this on the eve of our great offensive in the west.

It is easy to blame 'flu, intransigent coal owners and striking miners, but let it not be forgotten that the Conservatives howled down the Government's coal rationing plan in 1942. This plan, scientifically worked out by Sir William Beveridge, was primarily directed towards avoiding such a contingency as has now arisen. Early coal rationing would not have solved the shortage problem, but it would have enabled strategic reserves to be built up to avoid industrial cuts at a time when maximum production is vital. Let this piece of political irresponsibility not be forgotten; it will cost lives.

"NIMROD."

COMPETITION BACKWASH

SIR,—Obviously the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has a keen reception here from cover to cover. In the middle of dinner yesterday evening the telephone rang at my friend's house. Being the nearest to it I answered, and this is probably what caused the fish-bone to stick in my throat:

Hello! I hope to God you'll have the courtesy to allow me to finish.

But. . . .

This is the third time I've been cut off, so I won't waste words. I think you're a pig-headed, narrow-minded ignorant old buffoon, and if you think that your —— manœuvres at this time of the year are going to be one —— —— of use you're —— well mistaken. I suggest that you bury your own —— bald head in the —— river for a time instead of recalling hard-working men to join in your eighteenth-century field games. Ask your *cat* the meaning of Home Guard. . . .

Look here. This is *not* the third time you have been cut off from this number. You've not been speaking to me before, and you've obviously made a mistake.

Mistake? No. The last three people I rang were as unknown as yourself, but they were not as patient. I feel better already. Good-bye, and a Happy New Year.

It has only just occurred to me that the Competition results in last week's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION must have set this particular ball rolling—I mean bell ringing. I send you this partly as a compliment and partly to confirm your own warning. It might happen again—to you. D. R. N.

THE LATE ERIC GILL

SIR,—I am endeavouring to make a collection of my late husband's letters to his friends and acquaintances, so that a selection from them may ultimately be published in book form.

I should therefore be most grateful if anyone who possesses letters from Eric Gill would send them to me c/o Messrs. Jonathan Cape Limited, 30 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1. They will all be acknowledged, carefully copied, and returned as quickly as possible.

MARY GILL
Pigotts, (MRS. ERIC GILL)
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

AND the effect is as of stables." For years y eye has been baffled by lack of the word which uld define the poor streets of the East End, as y used to be before the Blitz; and here in thur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* which e written in 1894, I find it. Those acres of o-storey houses which lie below the level of e railway arches of Bethnal Green and which nd like an alien stretch of unfeatured ploughing yond the Commercial Road, are particularised last. The mind has won a foothold in a reign city.

For, east of Aldgate, another city begins. ndon flattens and sinks into its clay. Over ese lower dwellings the London sky, always like dirty window, is larger; the eyes and hands of ople are quicker, the skins yellower, the voices e as sharp as scissors. Every part of London has smell, and this region smells of rabid little ops, bloated factories, sub-let workrooms and rehouse floors; there is also the smell of slums, smell of poverty, racy but oftener sour; and ingling with these working odours, there ises an exhalation of the dirty river which, mewhere behind these streets and warehouses d dock walls, is oozing towards the flats of the hames estuary like a worm. The senses and the agination of the stranger are so pricked by this ighbourhood that he quickly gets a fevered pression of it; it will seem more exotic or ngier than it really is. And when we turn to erature for guidance, we are even less sure of at we see. For the literature of the East End very largely a stranger's literature. It lies under e melodramatic murk and the smear of senti- ental pathos, which, in the nineteenth century, ere generated by the guilty conscience of the iddle classes. They were terrified of the poor who ethed in an abyss just beyond their back door. he awful Gothic spectacle of hunger, squalor d crime was tolerable only as nightmare and ntasy—such as Dickens provided—and the siting foreigner alone could observe the English ums with the curiosity of the traveller or the untenance of the anthropologist. And there s another difficulty. Philanthropy, for all its mbug, did slowly have its effect on the public nscience in every generation, so that it was nuinely possible to say "things have changed." he Ratcliffe Highway went. Limehouse had been rged, and there arose a romantic literature the East End, based on a riotous evocation of e bad old times. The stranger's literature was e literature of a time which first strengthened orale by giving the reader a fright, and then nt on to make the fright pious, sentimental and cturesque.

But what of the literature written from within e East End, the really saturated literature which s been lived before it has been written? For ny years now, in accounts of the realism which me into fashion at the time of Gissing, I had ticed a recurring title: *Tales of Mean Streets*, Arthur Morrison, and lately I have been put to *The Hole in the Wall* and *Child of the Jago*, the same author. (They were published by ethuen and *Who's Who* informs me that Mr. orrison was born in 1863, and is a collector works of art.) They are written from the side and they have extraordinary merit; *e Hole in the Wall* strikes me as being one the minor masterpieces of the last forty ars. It has the kind of fidelity to scene that e modern documentary writers have sought, yet never flattened, as their work is, by concern conditions. Let us urge the importance of nditions; but let us not allow them to deflate e imagination or argue away the novelist's ief delight and greatest difficulty: the art of nstructing and telling a story complete in elf. For unless he learns this art, a novelist rilises his power of observation, the power to serve more than one thing at a time, the power see stereoscopically and perspectively, and to moving the congestions of fact that clog an impressionable mind. Arthur Morrison had this power. "Conditions" were in his bones; his books stand apart from the worthy and static pathos of Gissing, from the character albums of the writers of low comedy, from the picturesque and the nightmare schools. Mr. Morrison's early novels and sketches are often modest in their art, like the work of someone learning to write, but they have an anthropological drama of their own, and, at any rate, are not more awkward than Bennett's *Tales of the Five Towns*. What is missing from these novels is the modern novelist's sardonic exposure of the economic rackets which make the poor man poor; the brutality of poverty is subject enough for Mr. Morrison. A book like *Child of the Jago*, the story of a young thief in Bethnal Green, shows a sharp-eyed and intimate knowledge of how East End society used to behave as a society, of how it used to deploy its cunning and uphold its customs. Injustice is done and the President of the Immortals has already abandoned the hopeless scene to the human instinct of self-preservation when Mr. Morrison comes in to record it. Out comes the cosh, the street wars begin, the half-naked harpies run at each other with broken bottles, the pimps and the fences step over the bodies of the drunks who lie, pockets turned inside out, in the gutters. It's a world of sullen days in backrooms with the baby lying half dead on the bed and the hungry women gaping listlessly at the empty cupboards, while the men go out in search of loot and drink and come back with their eyes blackened and their belts ready to flay the undeserving family. I have picked out the seamier side of *Child of the Jago* not to gloat over the horrors but to indicate the material. Such incidents are not raked into the book without discrimination; these novels are not pools of self-pity in the Gissing manner; nor are they worked up with that sadistic touch of angry ecstasy which Dickens brought to his pictures of poverty. In Mr. Morrison's book slum life is the accepted life, a dirty but not a turgid stream. In their position, you say—as one ought to say of all human beings—these people have lived, they've kept their heads above water for a spell. Man is the animal who adapts himself.

Child of the Jago describes the brutal, drunken, murderous London of the late nineteenth century which used to shatter the visiting foreigner and send him home marvelling at English violence and English hypocrisy. Its picture of the street wars is unique. *The Hole in the Wall* raises this material to a far higher plane of narrative. Here is a thriller set in Dockland, where the filthy river, its fogs and its crimes, stain the mind as they did in *Our Mutual Friend*. Every gas-lit alley leads abruptly to some dubious business. The average thriller takes us step by step away from probability. It strains away from likelihood. *The Hole in the Wall* belongs to the higher and more satisfying kind, which conducts us from one unsuspected probability to the next. Mr. Morrison has employed what is, I suppose, the classical method of writing this kind of book; he shows us the story mainly through the eye of a young boy. The child goes to live with his grandfather, who keeps a pub at Wapping, and there he gradually discovers that his heroic grandfather is really a receiver of stolen goods. The old man comes by a wallet containing £800 which has been robbed from a defaulting shipowner—who has been murdered—and the plot is made out of the attempts of various criminal characters to get this money back. The merit of the book lies in its simple but careful reconstruction of the scene—the pubs and gin-shops of the Old Ratcliffe Highway, the locks and swing bridges, the alleys and gateways of Dockland with their police notices, the riverside jetties and their lighters, the way over the marshes to the lime kilns. I take it to be a mark of the highest skill in this kind of novel that nothing is mentioned which will not have, eventually, an importance to the tale; and that the motives for action arise in the characters and are not imposed on them by the need of working up a mystery and creating suspense. We do not know what their next step will be, because these people are still ruminating upon it themselves. Marr, the absconding shipowner, disguises himself as a sailor, but forgets that he will blab if he gets drunk; Dan Ogle who merely intends to take his watch, gradually sees that murder will be necessary if the £800 is to be taken; the blind fiddler who does not mind very much being double crossed, thinks otherwise when he is assaulted and ridiculed as well as cheated. And Mr. Morrison succeeds with them because he shows them to us, first of all as ordinary shady characters muddling along the path of shifty illegality, and then suddenly faced by a new, a more terrible temptation and jumping at it.

The Hole in the Wall moves calmly from one major scene to the next; there is no sagging of the narrative. We see Marr, stunned and tottering, led like a broken marionette between his murderers. They are bawling at the tops of their voices so that, in the night, passers-by will think they are drunken sailors helping a pal, instead of murderers dragging an almost lifeless body to the river. We see the body fished out—and what a remarkable piece of description that is. Morrison must have seen it happen. It "tells"—as Henry James used to say—because of the very homeliness of the boy's narrative. (There is a lesson to the modern tough writers here. They lose their effect because they are tough all the time. They do not allow us to have the homely, frightened, law-abiding emotions. They do not allow us the manly fear, and they lose the interest of moral conflict.) And then there is the tremendous scene where the blind fiddler takes his revenge on Ogle, the murderer. He is hiding in a lime-quarry. At night the fiddler gropes across the marshes to the shed where Ogle is sleeping:

> He had been gone no more than a few seconds, when the snore stopped. It stopped with a thump and a gasp, and a sudden buffeting of legs and arms; and in the midst arose a cry; a cry of so hideous an agony that Grimes the wharf-keeper, snug in his first sleep fifty yards away, sprang erect and staring in bed, and so sat motionless for half a minute ere he remembered his legs, and thrust them out to carry him to the window. And the dog on the wharf leapt the length of its chain, answering the cry with a torrent of wild barks.
>
> Floundering and tumbling against the frail boards of the shed the two men came out at the door in a struggling knot; Ogle wrestling and striking at random, while the other, cunning with a life's blindness, kept his own head safe, and hung as a dog hangs to a bull. His hands gripped his victim by ear and hair, while the thumbs still drove at the eyes the mess of smoking lime that clung and dripped about Ogle's head. It trickled burning through his hair, and it blistered lips and tongue, as he yelled and yelled again in the extremity of his anguish.

The blind man had blinded his persecutor.

One puts the book down looking back on the ground it has covered, seeing how economically it implanted that sinister Dockland of the Eighties on the mind, with a simple warmth and precision; how it mocked the little criminals and then, suddenly, struck out into the squalor behind the drink in the snug bar and the bawling songs in the upper room; and how finally it pierced one with human fear and horror, without once cutting adrift from probability and an identifiable daily life. It is a masterly course, sustained, calm and never exaggerated. The style a little old-fashioned, but it never scuttles away for safety into period dress. There was a London like this—we are convinced—mean, clumsy and hungry, murderous and sentimental. Those shrieks were heard. There were those even more disturbing silences in the night. Dockland, where the police used to go in threes, has its commemoration in this plain but, I hope, not forgotten masterpiece.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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Alberoni or the Spanish Conspiracy. By SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH. *Faber and Faber.* 15*s.*

Where is man most vulnerable?—at which organ of the character should a politician strike in order to subjugate another's will to his own?—at his self-respect, pride or ambition? The intuitive knowledge of how to impress and twist to one's own advantage men of whatever rank or temperament is the most essential of all the politician's accomplishments. Cardinal Alberoni was granted many talents with which to sway men. His wit was polished, his tact and grace unsurpassed, no catastrophe could ruffle his charm nor could rebuffs or sneers perturb his undulating urbanity. But the particular failing that above all others he delighted to exploit was man's cupidity. Wherever he went he distributed gifts; Venetian goblets, seeds of Italian flowers, masks—anything in fact which was unostentatious and yet showed that he had been put to some trouble to obtain it. These he supplemented with presents of country delicacies—spiced sausages and cheeses from his native Parma. Grasping statesmen and gluttonous courtiers fell into his snares, listened to his designs. . . . An interesting and timely little gift is a winning move in the game of self-advancement in society: careful distribution of sherry from Gibraltar, Sicilian olives or American luxuries will to-day produce the same gratifying effect in London as the gifts of Parmesan cheese at the French court two hundred and forty years ago.

His accomplishments and attentions never failed to win him patrons, although he was born a gardener's son. He first left Italy as secretary to the head of the Parmesan delegation to the great French marshal, the Duc de Vendôme. His lively Italian intelligence caught the general's fancy, and when after two years the delegates returned, he remained on Vendôme's staff officially representing the interests of Parma. He followed Vendôme into retirement after the defeat of Oudenarde, and when the general rose to power again, accompanied him in defence of French interests in Spain. Vendôme, however, died after establishing Louis XIV's grandson, Philip V, once and for all firmly on the throne of Spain. But the death of his patron did not disturb Alberoni's ascent; for, shortly after, the Duke of Parma appointed him his minister in Madrid, partly because his adroit and supple manners had now won the confidence of King Philip. Then quite suddenly the Queen died. Now this was a particularly opportune death; for Philip V was inordinately devoted to his wife, whoever the wife might be. She would have to be replaced instantaneously—and the purveyor of the new wife would be placed in a powerful position. Alberoni bided his time, manœuvring other candidates from the field. Choosing his moment, he suggested the niece of the Duke of Parma, Elizabeth Farnese; he triumphed; and, ridding himself of his political rivals with equal skill, became at the age of slightly over fifty first minister to the King. This post he held for five years. During that time he instituted a number of reforms into the chaotic administration of the country and made a treaty with England. He apparently hoped to conclude an alliance with France and England against the Emperor with the intention of driving the Austrians from Italy. But his plans were never permitted to mature. Philip ordered Sardinia to be occupied without warning and then made war with the Emperor certain by attacking Sicily; and then an English admiral cruising in the Mediterranean destroyed the Spanish fleet; and then the French invaded Spain. All Europe was against him, and the price of peace for Spain was Alberoni's dismissal. He fell from power, retired to Italy and died at the age of eighty-eight, still urbane, still witty and still entertaining his guests with exquisite meals cooked by his own hands.

Mr. Harcourt-Smith was debarred by the war from research among original sources, and his examination is therefore mostly confined to the secondary authorities in which he is well versed. Had the war not intervened he assures us his book would have been different. It is a pity he could not manage to be patient. For, modestly assuming he could make no substantial contribution to serious history, he decided to paint a vivid picture of the times and personalities of the period instead of searching for the roots of foreign policy and studying the arts and principles of statesmanship. It is largely a matter of the readers' taste whether he thinks the author has succeeded in his task. To re-create the atmosphere of a period is a subtle and delicate task. The artist requires a discerning palate. The use of herbs in cooking is such another art. Sage must be used with discretion; marjoram and chives enhance a salad—but if thyme and garlic are added as well, it is ruined. Mr. Harcourt-Smith is too profuse with his seasoning. The sequence of events is clouded by the profusion of anecdotes; every character, regardless of his relevance to the main story, is honoured with a pen-portrait: Victor-Amadeus, Peterborough, Saint-Simon, Bubb Doddington, Stanhope, des Ursins whizz through the pages, all equally bright—there is no chiaroscuro, no perspective, everything is painted with the same relentless detail in this picture. Of course, it is arguable that the diplomatic history of the first two decades of the eighteenth century is so bewildering that it defies analysis; certainly Mr. Harcourt-Smith's approach does nothing to relieve that impression. For he belongs to the school of biographers that regard history as an excruciatingly tedious subject which the reader can only endure if he is nudged by the author and jollied along with spicy jokes. Many of the stories are peculiar and entertaining, but they tend all to be the same; a uniform sexy glitter spangles the pages. So heavy is the seasoning, so intoxicating the draught, the air so drenched with perfumes, musk, jasmine and Schiaparelli's *Shocking*, that the reader hardly knows if he is above or below the dinner-table when he has finished the meal.

Nevertheless, it is not simply a description of the times. Mr. Harcourt-Smith's main historical contention is that if the English had not thwarted Alberoni's precocious Italian nationalism, Mussolini might never have disturbed us, and we should not now be driving the Germans out of Italy. Whether or not such historical generalisations are of value, they can surely only be justified if the foreign policy of the European Powers is exhaustively examined, the real springs behind the actions of the countries and their rulers laid bare, the relation of Spaniards and Germans to Italy considered. Was it ever a political possibility to achieve a stable alliance between France, England, and Spain? Was it unnatural to assume that Alberoni's policy was merely to replace Imperial influence in Italy by Spanish and French influence? I wish there had been a touch less gossip and a little more about the nature of politics, of the politicians of the time and their policies. For I am sure Mr. Harcourt Smith would have written as well about such matters as he does about pictures, scenery, food and the foibles of Court life.

NOEL ANNAN

AWKWARD TRUTHS

The Battle is the Pay-off. By RALPH INGERSOLL. *John Lane.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

How few of us in the fifth year of war really dare to think. What holds us back is a curious voluntary totalitarianism. When the official line is that 2 × 2 equals 5, we excuse our tacit agreement by an anxiety "to avoid providing ammunition to Dr. Goebbels." But the truth is that we increasingly conform with the prevailing illusions because we dare not face our own thoughts.

To tell the truth, only a very saintly person or a thick-skinned extravert can think and write honestly to-day. Intellectual integrity grows more and more incompatible with the conventional forms of sensibility, good taste and consideration for others. The awkward truth is uttered only by the awkward person.

I suspect Ralph Ingersoll of being an awkwa person, since he has dared to publish some aw ward truths. *The Battle is the Pay-Off* will, doubt, provide useful ammunition for the incessa whisper campaign against the American Arm which is such a feature of certain well-bre British circles; and I am afraid that his book m be avoided by those who are working for Angl American goodwill, simply because it is hone and therefore in some ways makes unpleasa reading.

Let me therefore begin by begging anyone wh really cares about Anglo-American collaboratio to buy, to read and to lend to their friends *Th Battle is the Pay-Off*.

Ostensibly it is the description of a mino one-day incident in the battle of El Guettar la spring, in which the Americans recaptured som of the ground lost in the battle of the Kasserin Pass. Ralph Ingersoll is concerned not wit strategy or tactics, but with fighting morale; an so he describes the battle in terms of his ow feelings, hour by hour through the day, in a attempt to discover what it is that distinguishe American fighting morale from that of th Russian or the British Army. Ingersoll state bluntly "We are still not as good an army as th Russian or the British or the Chinese—let alon the German. We are probably better now tha the Italian," and he wants to know the reaso why. British readers may find Ingersoll's metho distasteful. They may feel that undressing i public is not justifiable even if it is done t discover what is wrong with morale. This Britis dislike of self-dramatisation is one of the di tinguishing features of British morale; just a self-dramatisation and self-conscious bravery i a typical feature of American morale. To under stand America we must get over such prejudic and recognise that American morale is not wors than ours because it is different. Ingersoll' conclusion is clear cut. Whereas the British o Russian soldier wants the defeat of Germany fo its own sake, the American wants it as a means t an end, in order to get home. The America fights because he is homesick. Here is Ingersoll' summing up:

> To one with first-hand knowledge of the e strength of our enemies, the one thing that i disturbing, about the army as well as about publi opinion, is the difficulty Americans still find i facing the finality of this war, which is literally t the death.
>
> Too small a percentage of the soldiers in ou army—exactly as too small a proportion of thei friends and relatives at home—have in their sou accepted the fact that this is a war for keeps. The are not committed to this war. They are physicall committed. They are not spiritually committe yet. The spiritual commitment has been made i the name of the American people by its leaders, bu the great body of public opinion has not committe itself and the majority of the individuals in th army have not committed themselves. This pictur —of our formal commitment and our spiritu lagging—is the exact measure of how far we hav gone in the war, and how far we have still to go.

What is the reason for this "spiritual lagging" Ingersoll finds it in the fact that the America have not suffered personally under Fascism a Londoners did in the "blitz," or the Russian under German occupation. I find this explanatio incomplete. The 8th Army would have fough well even if London had not been "blitzed," an the Red Army would have fought well even i Russia had not been overrun. No doubt th distance of America from Europe accounts partl for the American soldier's lack of spiritu commitment. But there is something more to than that. What keeps the English soldier an civilian spiritually in the war is not persona suffering at the hands of the enemy—by itse this stimulates defeatism—but the deep traditiona sense of national unity which a European wa intensifies.

We are fighting in the fifth year of this wa primarily for survival as a nation and onl secondarily for freedom or democracy or agains Fascism. The concepts of democracy and anti Fascism divide us, the feeling for national surviva ites us. So, too, the German nation; though st Germans by now are at least unenthusiastic out National Socialism, they fight on for ional survival.

This European feeling of war for national vival must be completely foreign to an erican Army. American citizenship is based t on blood or national tradition, but on an ellectual acceptance of a constitution by zens of all European nations. In his bones the erican must feel a European war to be a sort civil war; and he must regard Germany not as eternal enemy, but as the place of origin of llions of industrious, law-abiding Americans. wonder the American soldier does not feel nself spiritually committed like the British or Russian to a war whose main result will be smashing of Germany.

No doubt that is why Ralph Ingersoll speaks of war against Fascism rather than the war inst Germany. He, like every American soldier, els the need for an ideological justification for ashing Germany. But let him beware. To ch the soldier that we are fighting not the Axis t Fascism may boomerang when the soldier es in North Africa and Italy every day in his own d his superior's conduct, evidence which seems contradict the assertion. The propaganda ncept designed to commit Americans to the ropean war may actually deepen the sense of sillusionment and accentuate the spiritual gging.

Surely the truth is that no "indoctrination" n commit the American people 100 per cent. ther to the European war or to the European ace. America's traditional war is in the Pacific, st as her traditional enemy is Japan. I should surprised if Ingersoll found any spiritual gging on Guadalcanal or New Guinea.

The fact that American *interests* demand the efeat of Germany does not, of course, affect the ue. For the spiritual commitment of a people a war is not a matter of rational interest but of ep emotional values, as the Russians have own so clearly. We can see it in our own case. arcely an American returns from India without marking on the difference between the fighting orale of the British soldier in the Mediterrean d that of the British soldier in India and the r East. We accept without question the cessity of victory over Germany; we need to be rsuaded by propaganda and by reason that pan is equally dangerous to our survival. And is means that, other things being equal, British hting morale in the Far East will probably display the weaknesses which Ralph Ingersoll has noticed in American fighting morale over here. These weaknesses can be remedied by training and leadership, but they must always be reckoned with as important factors—in peace no less than in war. The wise statesman, and the wise general, will resist the temptation to believe that they can be removed by fine phrases.

The sooner we and our American allies exchange such awkward truths about ourselves the better. Ralph Ingersoll has given us a lead.

JOHN EVANS

DEMOCRACY AND THE ARMED FORCES

Armies and the Art of Revolution. By KATHERINE CHORLEY. *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

When I was an undergraduate, not long after the last war, Left-wing speakers used to come down to Cambridge and talk about revolution. They always convinced me that our existing form of society was rapidly breaking down, and that our rulers would not peaceably give way to a new Socialist order, and that the Parliamentary Labour Party would prove about as effective as it in fact has proved. Their conclusion was the need to work for a revolution. But what, I asked, was a revolution? Well, there was the Russian example. But Russia had been cursed with the weakest and most decadent middle class. Its corrupt and incredibly inefficient ruling clique had reduced the country to a fantasy of misery and chaos before Lenin got his chance. Even then the decisive point was that the army, or, if you prefer, the conscripted peasantry, had become revolutionary. They began the revolution by taking the land, and in the towns the mood of the army would not permit the forcible suppressions of the strikers and revolutionary workers. Conditions of this kind always seemed to me requisites for any revolution in the modern State. The barricades, I argued, were out of date; a few tanks and machine guns, not to speak of aeroplanes, would suppress any purely proletarian revolt. Everything depended on the mood of the armed forces. And what are the circumstances in which an army is ready to make a revolution? Circumstances of defeat in war; we had seen it in Russia, Germany, Hungary and, indeed, in every defeated country. Then that meant that we should never have a revolution in Britain till we had a revolutionary army, and that was unlikely except after an unsuccessful war? Therefore to be a logical revolutionary one had to work for a war and then try to lose it? This was too much for me; our job, it seemed to me, was at least to try to make our social transformation by peaceful methods.

Mrs. Chorley has seriously investigated this question of the role of the army in revolutions. I know of no other book that tackles the problem thoroughly and objectively. Her range is wide. She deals with war and revolution in many countries, and if her conclusions are not novel they are none the less important. She agrees that no revolution in our day can succeed against the resistance of a trained military force unless there are special conditions that make it impossible for the State to make a determined use of that force. The Irish rebellion provides a peculiarly instructive illustration. It succeeded, not because the British Army was defeated, but because so much opinion in Britain and, equally important, in America, was sympathetic to the Irish cause. This brings us to the second point—that revolution is an international affair; in any estimate of the situation in Spain, for instance, you would have been hopelessly at sea unless your analysis included the probable rise of foreign Fascist forces to aid Franco's army revolt against the Republic.

Mrs. Chorley has a great deal to say about the behaviour of the officer class and of the way in which in practice it can and has often destroyed a democracy. What form of military organisation is most likely to preserve a democratic regime and prove effective in preventing a Fascist revolution? Here we come to a problem which has been too little studied in the past by Left-wing writers—what does "democratising the army" mean? Does an army become "democratic," in the sense of guaranteeing that the will of the majority is carried out, merely by a system of promotion from the ranks? Does the abolition of an officer class selected from an aristocracy make an army democratic? Is an army where the men and officers freely mingle on terms of equality in itself any safeguard, or do specially trained and mechanised forces as such tend to be anti-democratic?

If Mrs. Chorley does not fully answer all these and a score other similar questions about the relation of military force to property, she at least shows us the material available if we want to pursue the study for ourselves. It is a very considerable service. Those who read this book will learn a lot of history, and, unless they are confirmed Utopians, they will agree that, since our society is ultimately based on force, they had better study the meaning and methods by which force is exer-

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LIABILITIES	£	£
Current, Deposit and other Accounts	805,092,506	
Balances in account with Subsidiary Banks	17,407,365	
		822,499,871
Acceptances and Endorsements, etc., for account of Customers		15,554,276
Paid-up Capital		15,858,217
Reserve Fund		11,250,000
ASSETS		
Cash in Hand and with the Bank of England		84,933,633
Balances with other British Banks and Cheques in course of collection		35,913,904
Money at Call and Short Notice		21,896,900
Bills Discounted		24,364,572
Treasury Deposit Receipts		291,000,000
Investments		216,391,709
Investments in Subsidiary Banks (at cost, *less* amounts written off):—		
The British Linen Bank—£1,242,004 12s. 6d. Stock		3,726,284
Other Banks—(including fully-paid Stock and 500,000 "B" Shares of £5 each, £1 per Share paid up, in Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) and 1,000,000 Shares of £1 each, 5s. per Share paid up, in Barclays Bank (France) Limited)		2,496,615
Advances:—Customers and other Accounts	160,142,483	
Balances in account with Subsidiary Banks	833,925	
		160,976,408
Liability of Customers for Acceptances and Endorsements, etc.		15,554,276
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cised before they shout about revolutions. The revolutionary view that "we" shall win because "we are many, they are few" is as unrealistic as the Liberal assumption that in an established democracy votes and power are coincident.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE DARK HORSE

Poems, 1937-1942. By DAVID GASCOYNE. *Poetry, London and Nicholson and Watson.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. David Gascoyne has a remarkable talent. Until the appearance, long delayed, of the present volume, it was not possible to say quite how remarkable. His *Miserere* had become familiar from anthologies and revealed the distance its author had travelled since his surrealist days; a poem here and a poem there, usually of a Baudelairean tinge, caught the attention; but they were so few, and Mr. Gascoyne himself so elusive, that one could only guess appreciatively. Here was a dark horse, whose instinct it was to remain dark. At a time when anyone capable of putting half-rhymes on paper could get himself published, one poet at least felt the need of holding back. *Poems* 1937-1942—note the more recent date—would seem to justify him.

The book is divided into five parts: religious (the *Miserere*); metaphysical or "metapsychological" (mostly poems of sex and surrealism); elegiac (stanzas written in French to the memory of Alban Berg); personal; and poems of time and place. This grouping has obviously been made with care and, though the progress is not autobiographical, it represents in some degree cycles of experience. Thus, the religious poems in the first section convey a private war in which, to attain faith, the writer has had to sound his despair—

> Because the depths
> Are clear with only death's
> Marsh-light, because the rock of grief
> Is clearly too extreme for us to breach:
> Deepen our depths,
> And aid our unbelief

—while in the last section the War itself, dragging up our netherworlds, flattens out fear in monotonous or stricken landscapes, with here and there a glimpse of lucidity. A spring day in Oxford:

> The air shines with a mild magnificence . . .
> Leaves, voices, glitterings. . . . And there is also water
> Winding in easy ways among much green expanse.
>
> Or lying flat, in small floods, on the grass;
> Water which in its widespread crystal holds the whole soft song
> Of this swift tremulous instant of rebirth and peace.
> Tremulous—yet beneath, how deep its root!
> Timelessness of an afternoon! Air's gems, the walls' bland grey,
> Slim spires, hope-coloured fields: these belong to no date.

Such moments are comparatively rare in Mr. Gascoyne's poetry, which tends towards blackness and taut nerves. Black, indeed, is his favourite, almost his key word. Rimbaud's sonnet of the vowels suggests the cluster of feelings:

> A, noir corset velu des mouches éclatantes
> Qui bombillent autour des puanteurs cruelles,
> Gulfe d'ombre. . . .

Pessimism, *nausée,* the search for a salvation, sexual ambivalence, war—all the ingredients are there for a career that would retrace, once again, the steps of Rimbaud. Yet, though he derives from modern French poetry, Mr. Gascoyne has a pressure and originality of his own. Occasionally what he writes is cryptic, but never fashionable or loose; and with an opaqueness of subject matter there goes an astonishing purity of diction and a command of the long swift line. How well, for example, the final poem of the *Miserere* carries its discovery of a "Christ of Revolution and of Poetry"; what with another poet might seem a mere catch-word comes here as a revelation, thanks to the style of the whole poem. Style! Its appearance to-day rouses an incredulous pleasure. Only once, I believe, in these sixty-eight poems does Mr. Gascoyne descend to the bathos of the Forties:

> Marlowe's Leander, Michaelangelic gods, that young
> High-diving Mercury I once cut from a sports-page . . .

Worthy of Spauden; but as I have said, it is an only example. He can write with a Hopkins-like flush in *Walking At Whitsun:*

> . . . Then let the cloth across my back grow warm
> Beneath such comforting strong rays! new leaf
> Flow everywhere, translucently profuse,
> And flagrant weed be tall, the banks of lanes
> Sprawl dazed with swarming lion-petalled suns,
> As with largesse of pollen-coloured wealth
> The meadows; and across these vibrant lands
> Of Summer-afternoon through which I stroll
> Let rapidly gold glazes slide and chase
> Away such shades as still the hillside trees
> And make remindful mind turn cold. . . .

These poems have a very personal accent, with the "I" removed or resolved. Even the darkest of conflicts throws a picture on a screen:

> Caught in a web, and crushed within a vice;
> Watched by an Eye, but out of sight;
> By a brand burnt, and wounded by
> More keen a rustless blade than ever cut
> This earth's black veins—

Thus the "Artist" as he sees himself; and his justification of pessimism is no less clear:

> Toute plainte est réconciliation
> Avec le lamentable, et sait résoudre
> Les pleurs et les ruines, la maladie
> Des empires. . . .

The reader may have to study these poems a number of times to discover the secret of their elation, but there—under everything—it is. I hope that the threat contained in the title—no poem written since 1942—is not to be taken seriously. It would be tragic if such a talent were to abdicate.

Mr. Sutherland's illustrations, though not always to my taste, reinforce admirably the storm and stress, while missing (it seems to me) the elation of Mr. Gascoyne's verse. It only remains to be said that at eight-and-sixpence this is one of the best produced and most attractive books in the window to-day.

G. W. STONIER

WHITHER CAPITALISM?

Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. By JOSEPH A. SCHUMPETER. *Allen and Unwin.* 15s.

Anyone who looks for enlightenment on current issues will find little in this book that is useful. The war, for one thing, is ignored. It had to be ignored, one is told, to keep the fundamental questions clear. But Fascism, too, is omitted; and so is the New Deal. In fact, the Capitalism of this book turns out to be the system of unadulterated private enterprise that came to an end, in all the major countries of the world, during the Great Depression. This, by itself, is surprising enough. What is more puzzling still is to find so distinguished an economist as Professor Schumpeter presenting these views, in all seriousness, as a diagnosis of our time.

Despite all this, however, in a way because of it, this is an interesting book. It contains the very personal reflections, brilliant, unsystematic and capricious, of one who is a fervent admirer of Capitalism and yet convinced that Capitalism is doomed. His case is this: Capitalism has brought about a tremendous increase in the standard of living of all classes. This progress is due, above all, to the large-scale monopoly, so unjustly attacked by everyone, which is the inevitable concomitant of modern mass production. Slumps, it is true, are unavoidable, but they need not become longer or more severe; they may become less so. And the unemployed can easily be provided for. If given another run, Capitalism could complete its job: the final abolition of poverty. *Laissez faire les monopolistes!*

But he does not plead that Capitalism be retained. This would be futile, he explains, for mankind would not listen to him. Because what he offers, however attractive, is not good enough? Because there are speedier means to abolish poverty? Or because, in another social system, we may find it easier to prevent war? No; mankind will not listen, he says, because it is too stupid. Later on, on the other hand, one finds the author arguing, cheerfully and with skill and vigour, that, however impressive the economic performance of Capitalism, that of Socialism will be superior. And democracy, he adds, peremptorily, is perfectly compatible with it.

It is futile to try to save Capitalism, he argues, because Capitalism is, inevitably, destroying itself. The prime mover in this process of self-destruction is the concentration of production in the hands of an ever smaller number of giant combines. The entrepreneur of old who revolutionised the pattern of production disappears; economic progress becomes de-personalised, automatic. The protecting strata of society, the many small and medium-sized firms who have a hold on the people and count at the polls, are being destroyed. With the rise of bonds and shares, the idea of property becomes hollow and dead; workers and the public in general withdraw their moral allegiance. And all the time "agitators talk the sense of duty out of the working classes." When this process has run its course, though not before, Socialism will arrive.

A romantic story, told with nostalgia; and with bitterness. It puts last things first; omits first things altogether; and does both apparently in order to show at all cost that what is killing Capitalism is its success. When precisely Socialism will supersede Capitalism, in the United States, is not made quite certain; now it is in a hundred years' time, now *immediately,* in italics. Neither view is plausible. Nor are these two, the Capitalism of old and all-out Socialism, the relevant alternatives. Since the Great Depression, and even more since the present war, it has become pretty clear that, for the United States no less than for Great Britain, the turning-point in the evolution of Capitalism lies, not in the institution of private property, nor in the rise of monopoly, but in unemployment. When even the leaders of American industry are hastily assembling to draw up plans to provide jobs for all after the war, the author's casual dismissal of unemployment as a mere trifle does not sound very convincing. That private enterprise alone cannot maintain full employment is fairly clear; that the United States will see yet another slump appears inevitable. The slump need not, of course, last long. But whether it will throw up a Roosevelt or a Huey Long no one can foretell. What one can say with certainty is that Professor Schumpeter's prognosis, a gradual, quiet maturing of Capitalism until one day Socialism takes its place, will not come true.

A. RADOMYSLER

BEFORE THE CONQUEST

Anglo-Saxon England. By F. M. STENTON. *Oxford Press.* 21s.

It is at once a pleasure and a responsibility to review so admirable a work as this. A pleasure, for, whatever may be generally believed, reviewers would rather praise than censure; and a responsibility, for one whose knowledge is but ordinary can only be modest in dealing with a book every page of which bears marks of the most consummate erudition—the fruit of twenty years' special study based on a general scholarship already remarkable enough. The width it covers would excuse an occasional lack of depth—if such could be detected; among other subjects it deals with Old English literature, prose and poetry, law, public and private, the structure of society, place-names, the Church, the coinage; there are eight excellent maps, a bibliography, and an index (the work of Mrs. Stenton) which all students will find very useful. Recent discoveries are not neglected—thus there is a description of the astonishing ship-burial unearthed at Woodbridge in 1940. As to the accuracy of the work, all the present reviewer can venture, with due humility, to say is that wherever he has been able to test it from his own reading—from Gildas, e, the *Chronicle*, and Old English and Norse ature, he has found it exact; and he has felt uch of pride in recognising that he is capable appreciating the merits of these chapters. ing thus much, he is willing to take the rest on t, for there is a great deal of substance still left, it is important. As Professor Stenton says, is no longer possible to regard the culture of Anglo-Saxon Courts as the stunted and erty-stricken version of the environment ch surrounded the barbarian kings of larger ples." It was a real civilisation, well worthy e and long-continued study.

Among those who, while not precisely historical dents, have the good fortune to be able to ose serious history for their pleasure, various ders will, of course, take up different parts of book, as it is not possible for more than a few master the whole. Beginning with a chapter the immigration of the Anglo-Saxons into gland, it next gives an account of the Kingdoms Northumbria and the South English. It then, r incidentally discussing the difficult problem the Jutes, deals with the mission of Augustine, ascribes Ethelbert's easy reception of the sionaries to the influence of the Frankish gs. Those who take special interest in the urch and learning will find Professor Stenton's ount of Bede, Boniface and Lanfranc (for the k does not stop before it reaches the death of lliam the Conqueror) as clear as anything they possibly require; while those who have not de the great mistake of disregarding the Old glish period will appreciate the Professor's eful discrimination between tradition and itten records, and his exactitude as to dates places. On Bede even he can find little to that has not been often said before; with niface he dwells specially on the saint's ermination that a monastery should be the ne both of religion and of Latin and Greek ning; in his account of Lanfranc, short as it essarily is, he brings into prominence the chbishop's conception of ecclesiastical reform his relations with the Papacy and his high nding as a statesman.

There are still, apparently, some who fancy that glish begins with the Norman Conquest. Such ple, to correct a grievous error, cannot do ter than read Professor Stenton's earlier pters. But, if they cannot bring themselves such an undertaking, they should at least ster the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters. ey will thus, of course, learn much; there will nothing for them to unlearn; and many of m will not rest till they have gone back and e read the rest of the book.

E. E. KELLETT

ese Were Actors. Selected and Annotated by
JAMES AGATE. *Hutchinson.* 10s. 6d.

Some time ago Mr. Agate told the world about his ndfall—the scrapbook "seventeen inches tall, ten hes wide and five inches thick"—that he inherited m the late Clement Scott. *These Were Actors* is a ll selection from the larger one; the period ered is 1811 to 1833. The drama itself was in a r way, but Kean, Macready, Kemble and Mrs. ddons were playing in Shakespeare and carefully purgated comedies, and the critics were led by zlitt and Leigh Hunt. It is no wonder that Mr. te calls his legacy "The Book"; it must contain dless texts for Sunday sermons on the theatre. ese notices are like curios which offer information the studious and pleasure to the casual reader. The roar over the Cox *v.* Kean divorce suit provides ne amusing sidelights on contemporary manners. Bow Street magistrate actually advised Kean to tpone his next performance until public indignation subsided. Kean was found "sitting up in bed, nking brandy and water and smoking a cigar, soothed a broom girl dressed in picturesque attire, and tching a strolling acrobat tumbling over the chairs tables." He said he wished to face his enemies, added, "In the meantime, see how quietly I am ing here." So he appeared as advertised, and the holders of morality united with his fans in a perfect ibition of hooligan behaviour. Then we have a

Company Meeting

MARTINS BANK

REMARKABLY ACTIVE YEAR

POST-WAR BANKING POLICY

MR. F. A. BATES, chairman of Martins Bank, Limited, in a statement issued with the report and accounts to be presented to the annual meeting on January 25th, says: This month Mr. J. M. Furniss completes fifty years in the service of the bank. He began his notable career with the bank, and I am happy to say retains his energy after this long period. I cannot speak too highly of that service, and more especially of his able guidance since March, 1933, when he became the head of the executive as general manager. In 1939 he joined the Board of Directors. You will, I know, welcome this opportunity of joining in congratulating him on the occasion and thanking him for all the ability and enthusiasm he applies to the bank's affairs. We were very pleased to see his name in the list of New Year Honours, and warmly congratulate him upon the honour of Commander of the Order of the British Empire conferred upon him by His Majesty the King.

Our men in the Forces have further distinguished themselves. To them I send our warmest congratulations. Our sympathy with relatives in bereavement or anxiety is deep and sincere. The remaining staff take the strain of the war cheerfully, and the work is done with great efficiency and loyalty.

The bank has progressed soundly, very much on the lines of the previous year. Our total resources now exceed £197,558,000. Customers' deposits and current account balances have reached the new record figure of £180,131,000, which is an increase of £12,793,000 on a year ago. This increase has been almost entirely absorbed by Treasury deposit receipts, which have risen during the year to the large amount of £58,000,000. On the other hand, advances (formerly the bank's main asset, but now taking third place), after a steadily reducing tendency for some years, were fairly stable last year, and are now somewhat higher than a year ago.

INTERESTS OF SMALL TRADERS

The bank's high degree of liquidity amounts, quite apart from our large holding of short-dated investments in British Government securities, to 55.03 per cent. of our public liabilities, and places us in a strong position to meet any post-war demand for accommodation. When that time happily comes, and controls have been relaxed, we shall welcome requests for banking assistance, and ready consideration will be given to the requirements of small traders whose businesses have been affected and will need re-establishment after the ravages of the war years. In the consideration then given, the problems of the returning ex-Service men will have a full share.

The net profit for the year is £606,700, which is £30,066 in excess of the figure for the previous year. From the amount available for distribution a further £100,000 has been placed to the published reserve, increasing that fund to £3,800,000 and reserve for future contingencies again receives £100,000.

The bank's business has been remarkably active, with expanding turnover and a notable increase in the number of new accounts. The last-mentioned feature is particularly encouraging, for it is a clear indication that the people generally are becoming increasingly banking-minded and making still greater use of the bank's many services. All currency notes not required for immediate need should be taken out of circulation by investment in Government loans, or payment into banking accounts for later transfer into such loans. In this way the public will become not only banking-minded but savings-minded, to the great advantage of the country and themselves.

GEMS FOR SALE. Jewels of enjoyment and pearls of perfection are King Six Cigars, sparkling value at 1/- each.

LLOYDS BANK LIMITED

LORD WARDINGTON'S ADDRESS

THE annual general meeting of Lloyds Bank Limited will be held in London on the 28th January. Following is a summary of the address by the Chairman, the Rt. Hon. Lord Wardington, circulated to members with the report and accounts.

I have again to deplore the loss through death of two of our colleagues. Sir Guy Granet joined our Board in 1927 and was held in the highest regard and affection by us all.

The same may be said with equal truth in regard to Lord Luke, who died last February.

Since our last Annual General Meeting we have had pleasure in electing The Rt. Hon. Lord Luke of Pavenham, D.L., a son of our late Director, and Major Egbert Cadbury, D.S.C., D.F.C., to our Board.

BALANCE SHEET & PROFIT AND LOSS

Under the influence of deficit borrowing by the Treasury our deposits have continued their upward trend and the whole of our additional resources has gone directly to the promotion of the war effort in the form of extended credit to the Government.

Naturally, such an important addition to our resources has meant increased earning power; but no one who has followed my remarks in previous years will expect the whole of the increased earnings to have found their way into our net profits. To take one item alone, a further drop in our advances to customers, which is our best interest earning asset, counterbalances, so far as profits are concerned, the greater part of the increase in our Treasury Deposit Receipts. Then, too, we have felt it only right, in these difficult and costly times, to help our loyal and hard-working staff to balance their family budgets by a cash bonus which we paid to them just before Christmas.

After meeting our heavy charges for income tax and national defence contribution, there remains a balance of profit available for distribution of £1,515,000, an increase of £151,000 on the preceding year.

We made a start last year towards building up a separate War Contingency Fund for certain purposes, the nature of which I broadly indicated to you at that time. We have thought it very desirable to make a further addition to that Fund this year and to allot £200,000 to our General Contingency Fund, and £100,000 to our Premises Account.

We are able to recommend the payment of our usual dividend, leaving quite a substantial amount to increase the balance carried forward.

I have shown how the whole of any increase in our Deposits is at once made available to H.M. Government in the form of Treasury Deposit Receipts or National War Bonds. From the point of view of the country as a whole it would be preferable if the public were to subscribe direct for Government loans.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

Our Balance Sheet of to-day bears little resemblance to those of pre-war days. Not only are the figures greatly swollen, but their proportions one to another have completely altered. This raises problems which become more and more immediate every month the war draws nearer to its end. When that happy day arrives it would seem inevitable that there will be great demands for financial assistance of various kinds in the great work of reconstruction.

I have no doubt that the banks will not only be anxious to play their part in the great tasks then facing the country, but they will be also willing to be more elastic in their views as to what constitutes a legitimate banking loan. A glance at our figures, and they are very similar to those of other banks, shows that if we returned to anything like the proportion which our advances bore to our deposits in more normal times, we could increase our loans by over £200,000,000 and still be lending only 50 per cent. of our deposits. If this change-over took place in all the banks there could be an increase of well over £1,000 million in their advances to the public.

Of all the tasks before us, none is more important than the re-establishment of our export trade. Without it we can neither eat nor work. Both food and raw material are essential for our livelihood.

report of Talma, muttering on his deathbed, "Voltaire, Voltaire, Voltaire," and of Elliston solemnly ordering the Drury Lane cat to be hanged because she had walked across the stage during a performance and produced " *mal-à-propos* merriment."

Mr. Agate appears very little in this book, but in the sense that selection is a part of creation it is very much his own. Who wrote of a certain actor that he was " an icicle upon the bust of tragedy " ? Mr. A., not quite content after a Gielgud evening ? Not at all. It was Hazlitt, of Kemble, in 1816. But one can see a kind of family likeness there.

The Cornhill. January. *John Murray. 2s. 6d.*

Founded by Thackeray in 1860, the *Cornhill* disappeared nearly five years ago, and has now been resuscitated under the rule of Mr. Peter Quennell. The first number of the new series contains articles by Max Beerbohm, Maurice Bowra, Rose Macaulay, Raymond Mortimer, John Piper and the Editor; stories by Elizabeth Bowen and Anna Kavan, a poem by John Betjeman, and some lively translations of Turkish peasant poetry by Derek Patmore. There are also excellent illustrations. The *Cornhill* is not political, and, judged by this number, is to be less mercurial than *Horizon*. There is certainly room alike for the sweet disorder that reigns in Mr. Connolly's class-room, and for the serenity imposed by Mr. Quennell's nice conduct of a clouded cane. One of his pupils, Osbert Lancaster, has indeed drawn some delightfully disrespectful caricatures of literary men, doubtless escaping the ferule by sagely omitting to portray the Headmaster. May we offer our congratulations on the distinction of the writing and our best wishes alike to the editor and the publishers ?

Week-end Competitions

No. 729

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for the best English versions of the famous sonnet by du Bellay:

Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage,
Ou comme cestuy là qui conquit la toison,
Et puis est retourné, plein d'usage et raison,
Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son aage !
Quand revoiray-je, helas, de mon petit village
Fumer la cheminée : et en quelle saison
Revoiray-je le clos de ma pauvre maison,
Qui m'est une province, et beaucoup d'avantage ?
Plus me plaist la sejour qu'ont basty mes ayeux,
Que des palais Romains le front audacieux :
Plus que le marbre dur me plaist l'ardoise fine,
Plus mon Loyre Gaulois, que le Tybre Latin,
Plus mon petit Lyré, que le mont Palatin,
Et plus que l'air marin la doulceur Angevine.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 31st.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 726

Set by W. R.

The usual prizes are offered for a serious poem on *Love Among the Ruins of London* in three stanzas of the same metre as *Love Among the Ruins*. For the benefit of competitors who have not a Browning at hand, here is one stanza :—

Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—

Report by W. R.

The stanzas in *Love Among the Ruins* are numbered ; I quoted one, and asked for three on the same model. Yet many competitors sent in much longer poems. The metre, which I believe was Browning's invention, was found very difficult. Many verses submitted had four syllables in the short lines. But the very large entry suggests that competitors enjoyed trying their hand at so tricky a problem. Those who managed best include Veritas, Enid M. Jones, Little Billee, Numerator, Willy Tadpole, Guy Innes, M. A. Breary, Charon, J. Taylor, W. H. G. Price, John Overton and Damon. I recommend that the prize money be divided equally between Muriel Grainger, Allan M. Laing, R. J. P. Hewison and William Bliss.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS OF LONDON

In the desolated alleys near Saint Paul's
Dust still falls,
And by Paternoster Row, the bookman's haunt,
Ruins gaunt
Stand uncovered, as though mourning Fleet Street's pride—
Lost Saint Bride.

But in city wastes are churches once concealed,
Now revealed—
All the squalid blocks that hid their ancient stone
Overthrown—
And the quiet benediction of a sunset fires
Wounded spires.

Pricking up between the paving, shoots of green
Now are seen ;
In a sheltered niche a bird finds spartan rest
For her nest—
There is love among the ruins ; after strife
There is life.

MURIEL GRAINGER

OUT OF THE BOMB CAME FORTH GREENNESS

In a narrow East End alley, where some Hun
Had his fun
With a hive of sordid human honeycombs,
Precious homes,
Leaving heaps of rubble smoking to the sky,
Hell knows why.
Time has levelled off the melancholy mess,
More or less ;
And the winds of heaven have visited the scene,
Sowing green
Bits of bombs and bits of houses now let pass
Blades of grass.

By wide acres of sad brickwork—builders' sin !—
All hemmed in,
Smiles a tiny pool of verdure, Nature's score
Against War ;
And small children gather daisies, growing swee
In the street.

ALLAN M. LAING

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS OF LONDO

Let us wander through this London which the bli
Smashed to bits,
Where through wounded roofs the light on riven wal
Jagged falls,
Where the ruins point their fingers to the sky—
You and I.

Let us, poised upon this watershed of time,
Stand sublime,
With the hollow shapes of what the past has burne
Unconcerned,
For the lovely shadowings of what may come
Still too numb.

Yet we ask, what will our love, dead centre past,
Be at last ?
Pallid willow-herb on heaps of blackened stone
Overgrown—
Or a city clean and fair and laughter-filled
Shall we build ?

R. J. P. HEWISON

Fragment from a Poem " Love Among London Ruins," written by a poet from New Zealand, cir A.D. 3000

When on London's broken bridge we stood at gaze
Sunset blaze,
Lit the misty river, gilded crumbling walls
Once St. Paul's ;
But I only saw the dawning New World rise
In your eyes.

So, in Rome once, Time saw Saxon lovers stand,
Hand in hand,
Where the Forum's pillars rose against the sky
Brokenly ;
Wond'ring, while the scent of trodden thyme w
sweet
'Neath their feet.

Heedless, happy ; for the Future all was theirs.
Rome's old cares
Let the dead Past bury ; they could only see,
Just as we,
Distant woodlands and their little sea-girt home
Far from Rome.

WILLIAM BLISS

* * *

Will " Simkin " please send his name and address

Accommodation Offered and Wanted

FURN. bed-sit.-rm. to let, with breakfast, geyser bath. Belsize Avenue. Pri 5795.

OFFERED part farmhouse, furnished, south-east corner of Sussex. Bath, constant h.w., no attendance, reference required. Box 3597.

WAR worker seeks another woman to share flat in Hampstead. Box 3573.

2 PLEASANT rooms, part furn., use k. & b., 1 min. park, 12 sea, rent free, in return for light help, chiefly minding 2 children (33 and 5 months) some evenings, etc. Mother with young child pref. Hanson, 18 Eversley Rd., Swansea.

GENT. wants paying-guest companion. Cottage edge Dartmoor. Peaceful. Isolated, accessible bus, rail, village. BM/FIL, W.C.1.

2 to 3 well-furnished rooms. Kitchen, bath, in large flat. Belsize Park Gardens. Phone : Primrose 2354.

TWO furnished rooms, share kitchen, light, heat and vegetables, offered couple in return part-time gardening and housework. Outskirts town. Mrs. Lambert, The Croft, Combe Down, Bath.

FACING Heath, 8 mins. Golders Grn. Stn. Couple with nurse-compn. and 2 baby boys wish share unf. large mod., sunny gdn., house with couple/mother and child(ren). Int. music, books, arts. Rent 30s. to 50s. p.w. according accom. required. Suggestions. Box 3653.

Accommodation—continued

RETIRED man shortly wants quiet, good-class London apartments with service and meals. Particulars and terms, Box 3389.

2 or 3 study-bed-sit. rooms, cent. htg., ckg. facils., phone, wanted within ½ hr. Aldwych by quiet Brit. man. No hurry if setting congnl., communications good, rent mod. Box 3651.

SCOT, travld., linquist, experienced with young folks, wants living quarters with phone. London. Box 3652.

YOUNG Prof. of Philos. looks for charming accom. in or near London, suitable for writing a book on art. Box 3679.

URGENTLY wanted, 3/4 room unf. s.c. flat, N.W. area. Speedwell 0287.

To Let and Wanted

WELL furnished flat to let, Maida Vale. 2 bedrooms, lounge, kitch., bthrm., 4 *gns.* week. Enquire after 8 p.m. Mai 2675.

URGENTLY wanted modern 1–2 room, unfurnished s.c. flat, N.W. area. Box 3532.

IS there quiet unfurn. habitation, Surrey, Kent, 1 hr. travel London, for married couple valiantly coping war overstrain ? Box 3586.

PROFESSIONAL couple require unfurnished minimum three rooms, kitchenette, bathroom, preferably but not essentially self-contained, Old Hampstead pref. Box 3585.

Where to Stay and Restaurants

LAKE District. Beck Allans, Grasmere, attractive vegetarian guest house for restful or strenuous holidays. Central situation. Modern conveniences. Grasmere 129.

PERFECT peace, Vi-spring beds. Own produce. Mod. conv. 14th C. manor farm. Upper Quinton, Stratford-on-Avon.

PETROUCHKA, Russian Restaurant, 341 Oxford Street, W.1 (near New Bond Street). May 2297. Russian x English food. Breakfasts, Luncheons, Teas and Dinners. Open daily, except Thursdays, till 10.30 p.m.

L'ORIENT. Oriental and Continental specialities. Luncheons and dinners. Open daily, 56 St. Giles High St. (adj. Tottenham Ct. Rd. Tube). Tem 5717.

Specialised Training

UNIVERSITY Correspondence College prepares students for London University Matriculation, Special Entrance, Intermediate and Degree exams. Highly qualified tutors. Low fees ; instalments. Prospectus post free from Registrar, 70 Burlington House, Cambridge.

LEARN to speak well. Gladys Nyren, L.R.A.M. (Elocution), 5 Antrim Mansions. N.W.3. Pri. 1369. Phone after 6.30.

MAYFAIR Secretarial College for Gentlewomen, 57 Duke St., Grosvenor Sq., W.1. MAYfair 6626–7. New courses starts Jan. 24th. Three scholarships available.

Schools and Educational

THAMES Bank Nursery School, Chiswi Mall, has vacancies for the Spring Ter Mornings only. Tel. Chiswick 1803.

REDUCED Fees for backward child (over next term. Wales. Interview Londo Box 3499.

FREEDOM and self-government. K quhanity House, Castle Douglas, Sco land, has the full approval of A. S. Ne Apply John M. Aitkenhead, Headmaster.

MALTMAN'S GREEN. Gerrard's Cro Head Mistress : Miss Chambers, M. Aim—to develop character and intellect, respe individuality and encourage initiative. Pr paration for Universities, professions. 15 acr

PINEWOOD, Crowborough, at The Hill, Colan, St. Columb, Cornwall, children 3 to 13, where environ., diet, psych and teaching methods maintain health happiness. E. Strachan, St. Mawgan 279.

ST. CHRISTOPHER School, Letchwor Co-education to 19 years in an open-air mosphere of ordered freedom. H. Lyn Harr M.A., LL.B. ; Mrs. Lyn Harris, M.A.

WENNINGTON Hall, via Lancaster. Gro ing school community, boys and gi based prog. educational, social principles. Ju and Secondary. Exp. graduates. Quiet ar excellent cooking. Kenneth C. Barnes, B.S

Company Meetings

BARCLAYS BANK

INCREASED NET PROFIT

Mr. Edwin Fisher's Statement

THE forty-ninth ordinary general meeting of Barclays ank Limited will be held in London on Jan. 24th.

The following is an extract from the statement y the chairman, Mr. Edwin Fisher, circulated with he report and accounts :

Our current, deposit and other accounts at Dec. 31st, 1943, attained the record high level of £822,499,871, compared with £720,976,569 at the lose of 1942. The aggregate figures of the eleven ondon Clearing Banks show that this movement onforms in a general way with that for the banks as whole, but our own bank has again somewhat nlarged its proportionate share of the total increase. n each month during the past three years the number f current accounts in our books has grown sub- antially, and the rate of growth has gained momen- um from one year to the next. This movement is pread throughout the country with an evenness which s quite remarkable.

Our cash in hand and with the Bank of England, alances with other British banks and cheques in ourse of collection, money at call and short notice, ills discounted, and Treasury Deposit Receipts ave risen to a total of £458,109,009, which represents proportion of 55.69 per. cent. of our current, deposit nd other accounts. Treasury Deposit Receipts, hich have increased during the year from £191,500,000 to £291,000,000, have become the rgest of our assets. The rise in our investments, ncluding those in subsidiary banks, from £206,459,854 o £216,391,769 was smaller than in the previous welve months. Advances have undergone a further eduction from £169,213,319 to £160,976,408, but otwithstanding this contraction in the most remunera- ive outlet for the employment of our funds, the larger esources at our disposal have helped us to show an ncrease in our profit for the year.

The net profit of the bank for the year ended Dec. 31st last, after payment of all charges and after aking provision for all bad and doubtful debts and or contingencies, amounted to £1,584,113, which ompares with £1,529,743 for 1942. The directors ave allocated £250,000 to contingency account and £250,000 to premises reserve account. The directors ow recommend the payment of final dividends of per cent., making 10 per cent. for the year, on the "A" stock and 7 per cent., making 14 per cent. r the year, on the "B" stock and "C" stock, less ncome-tax in each case.

BRITISH TRADE OUTLOOK

As our belief in ultimate victory has been gradually ansformed from a dogged act of faith into a well- unded conviction, thoughts have turned more and ore urgently towards the aftermath and the problems hich will follow. It is well that this should be so, or events do not wait upon plans. It seems now to be idely recognised that without international colla- oration we cannot look forward with confidence to he future. But no international system can be xpected to do more than provide conditions favour- ble to the fruitful development of international elationships. Our purpose must be to achieve and aintain maximum efficiency in every department of ational life. I need scarcely say that our own bank, common with the other British banks, will add its ull weight to the forces of restoration. One does not xpect a sudden or violent change-over and we must nticipate a measure of control, with the exercise of riorities, until the whole machine adjusts itself to the ew conditions.

Situated as we are our dependence on imports annot be denied, and imports have to be paid for by xports. Thus we must build up our overseas trade we are to restore, let alone improve, our standard of iving. Not forgetting that, under the stimulus of ar conditions, secondary industries have been eveloped and extended in primary producing ountries, we should in looking forward be ever onscious of the fact that in world markets both our erchandise and our services may be expected to meet growing rigour of competition as the deficiencies rising out of the war are made good, and the more ermanent pattern of the future emerges.

WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED

THE HON. RUPERT BECKETT'S REVIEW

THE annual ordinary general meeting of Westminster Bank Limited will be held on January 26th at 41 Lothbury, London, E.C.

The following is a summary of the statement by the chairman, the Hon. Rupert E. Beckett, circulated with the report and accounts :

The profit for the past year, £1,347,815, shows an increase on that of the previous year of £110,230, this increase arising from the larger resources at the bank's disposal accruing from continuous and heavy Government disbursements. After paying dividends, less tax, of 18 per cent. on the partly-paid shares and 12½ per cent. on the stock, the directors have decided to make the usual provision of £300,000 to Officers' Pension Fund and to allocate £250,000 to the Bank Premises Reinstatement and Rebuilding Fund. The liquidity of the assets shows the bank in a strong position to meet all calls by depositors when the inevitable demands ensue, and to meet liberally requirements for loans and overdrafts, which are now for all banks abnormally low.

RETARDING WORLD TRADE

Turning, then, from banking to national affairs, Mr. Beckett speaks of the unwisdom of accepting at this stage *obiter dicta* as to what we shall or shall not be in a position to afford when the longed-for days of peace arrive. He stresses that to get world trade going again will be the paramount task for the Allied Nations. The obvious essentials will be for all nations to work peaceably together, exchanging goods and services on a mutually beneficial basis, but it is likely to be some considerable time before such harmonious working will be achieved. The prime need for the stricken nations will be an adequate supply of food, shelter and clothing, and it will not be until these wants have been supplied that the rebuilding of industry, enabling the exchange of goods and services, can be undertaken.

Second only to this task will be that of starting up the machinery of trade and commerce again. To assist in this Mr. Beckett suggests that gold as the currency medium must be seriously considered. It has advantages not apparent in other media. A means must be devised to avoid the rigidity of the gold standard as we knew it in the past.

Mr. Beckett then speaks briefly in answer to the question, "What are the prospects of our recovery after the war ?" It is obvious, he remarks, that we have suffered considerable losses in many directions : our stock of gold, our foreign investments, our ships at sea, our factories and houses. The total loss from all these sources cannot be easily computed ; it is certainly severe, but should not be unduly large either in comparison with our pre-war total national wealth or with our current productive capacity.

Our ability to make good this loss rests primarily on the effects of the war on our available man-power, and it seems not improbable that the decrease in our national productivity through loss of man-power in the war will be more than offset by the additional output of the residual of war workers electing to remain in industry after the war. As regards the country's industrial equipment, buildings, plant and machinery have been destroyed, and a huge legacy of repair work, left undone through stress of war, remains to be undertaken, but on the other hand the Government has built a great many new factories, fully equipped with up-to-date tools and machinery, and a considerable number of these will be convertible to peace-time uses.

EXPORT PROBLEMS

But it has to be remembered that it was mainly on the export side of our trade that unemployment was most marked and proved so obstinate to cure, and in this regard the difficulties have not decreased but multiplied. Marked changes in the form and direction of export trade have been brought about by the war. We have had to neglect certain of our important trade connections, and these will need cultivating anew.

Then some of our principal exports demand imports of the raw material, but we cannot pay for imports except by exports.

MIDLAND BANK LTD.

EXTRACTS FROM STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN,

MR. STANLEY CHRISTOPHERSON.

We shall gather at our fifth war-time annual meeting under the shadow of a great loss. Some people will remember Reginald McKenna first and foremost as a statesman, some as an outstanding banker, some as a champion and exponent of progressive monetary ideas. We have in truth lost a great chairman.

MONETARY CONDITIONS

It is proof of wise official management of the country's economic and financial affairs that the continued enlargement of the supply of money has been prevented from bringing about any general rise in prices. Assuming, however, that a state of maximum productive activity had already been attained, the expansion of deposits last year must be seen as resulting from budgetary needs rather than from any further growth of the public's requirements of money with which to transact its daily business. Similarly, the persistent increase in the quantity of currency outstanding can have only a partial justification in real public needs. In short, the amount of surplus cash in the hands of the public, whether held as currency or as liquid bank balances, is growing, and it would be to the advantage both of the nation and of the owners of the money, now and in the future, if a larger proportion of these unused resources were turned into holdings of Government securities.

POST-WAR BUSINESS PROBLEMS

The tasks of reconstruction and readjustment to a state of peace will be no less complex than those arising in the course of war, and for our own part preparatory action has been taken. We have established within the bank a "Committee on Post-War Business Problems," in an attempt to foresee and prepare for the difficulties which will confront our business customers and ourselves in the period of transition from war to peace economy.

Constant adaptability is required in the types of financial service rendered and in their availability to meet ever-changing and infinitely differing needs. Looking to the future, we hold the conviction that the economic progress of the country will depend very largely on the enterprise and resourcefulness of the small business undertaking and the individual business man, in whatever branch of industry or trade. Too often in the past these qualities have been stultified or misdirected through inadequacy of financial resources, and it is of the very first importance that this obstacle should be removed as part of the preparation for the process of industrial reconstruction and expansion, with due emphasis on the special needs of the country in the export trade. We are earnestly studying possibilities of so improving or widening our banking service, always presupposing the maintenance of cheap money as a primary essential, as to furnish the fullest possible support for promising enterprises under good auspices—support which shall be based as much upon the character, integrity and business capacity of the borrower as upon the extent and nature of his resources.

ECONOMIC AND MONETARY POLICY

To make the most of the opportunities of victory will require, not only patience and self-restraint on the part of the public and the business community, but great wisdom and understanding on the part of the authorities, supported by the full collaboration of primary and manufacturing industries, trade and finance.

During this war the Government, profiting by experience, has to a large extent avoided the evils of inflation, partly by direct restrictions on the use of purchasing power, partly by controlled distribution of supplies, and partly by the use of subsidies to hold in check the spiral of price and wage increases. The same methods will be called for, on a gradually diminishing scale, in the immediate post-war period until demand and supply are judged likely to be in equilibrium in a free market. On the other hand, we can be assured that this time there will be no misguided attempt to enforce a decline in prices through measures of deflation ; the authorities are alive to the inherent dangers of such a policy.